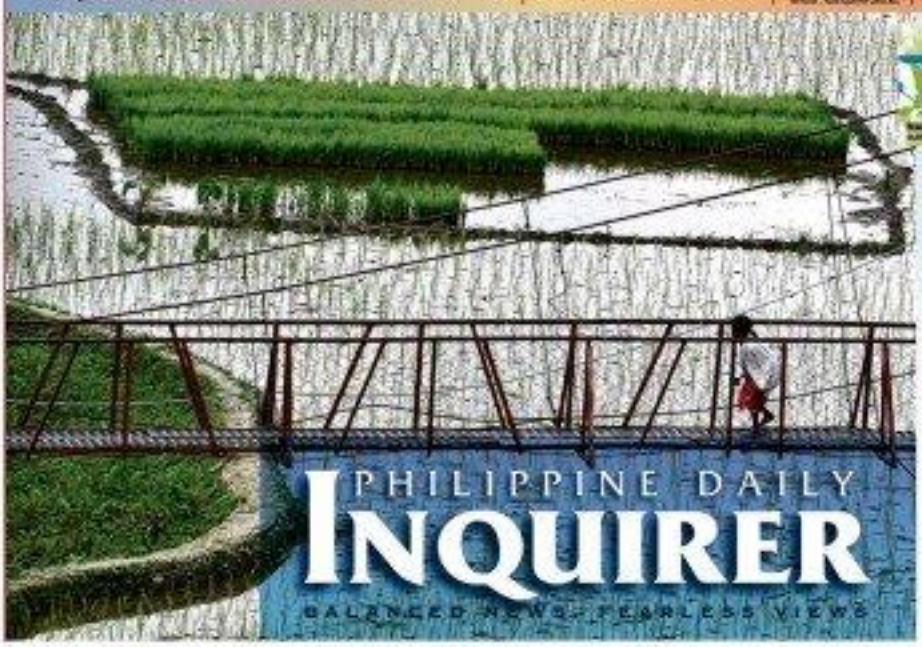
Thursday, March 15, 2012 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 27 / No. 98 P16 | Mobile Alerts: Text INQ ON BREAKING to 4467 | www.inquirer.net Twitter: @inquirerdotnet



PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

job fair
CAREER EXPO 2012

THE GREENING OF SUMMER This rice field in Barooc, Ifugao province, is turning green as farmers start planting the "dinawon" rice variety which is best suited for the hot months of March and April.

NEWS
Palace braces for transport strike / A2

NEWS
Weather bureau chief quits / A8

WORLD
Encyclopedia Britannica opts to end print editions/ A28

Swiss bus crash kills 28 Belgian tourists /A28

METRO
2 'child rapists' killed in MPD cell / A25

Senators await Corona

Strike 3 vs designated PH envoy to China

By Cathy C. Yamsuan

FOR THE THIRD time, the Commission on Appointments (CA) deferred the confirmation of Domingo Lee as Philippine ambassador to China for his failure to answer questions about the Spratlys dispute.

Sen. Sergio Osmeña III specifically asked Lee yesterday about three subarticles of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos) that China said it did not agree with.

China and the Philippines are among the claimants of all or part of the chain of islands in the West Philippine Sea (South

SPRATLY | A13

Ex-Governor Reyes: Real masterminds laughing

FORMER Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes yesterday assailed the decision of a Department of Justice (DOJ) panel of prosecutors to revive a murder case against him in connection with the killing last year of broadcaster-environmentalist Gerardo "Doc Gerry" Ortega.

"The true masterminds are laughing their heads off at this moment. Sir, I don't lose hope because I'm convinced justice will be served eventually in due time," Reyes said in a brief statement.

In a resolution released on Tuesday, the prosecutors reversed a previous DOJ panel

EX-GOVERNOR | A17

CJ testimony not yet a necessity, says Cuevas

WHERE'S P-NOY? Budget Secretary Florencio Abad, representing President Aquino who was not feeling well (note empty chair), meets officers of Integrity Initiative (from left) vice chair Hubert d'Aboville and chair Ramon del Rosario during a courtesy call in Malacañang. EDYP DIOKNO

By Christian V. Esguerra

JUST three days into the defense panel's presentation, President Aquino's impatient allies sitting as judges in the Senate impeachment court yesterday demanded that Chief Justice Renato Corona himself testify and explain his assets and dollar deposits.

Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV sought a categorical commitment from the lead defense counsel, Serafin Cuevas, that Corona himself would appear in the impeachment trial. Trillanes reminded Cuevas that Corona himself had promised in media interviews last week that he would explain his dollar accounts.

"I would like to take this opportunity to ask you if you have any plans to divulge the dollar accounts as promised by the Chief Justice himself," the senator said on Day 20 of the impeachment trial.

"I'm only holding you to your word ... as well as the word of the Chief Justice in his media rounds that he will divulge and if you have the Chief Justice talking, then you have to value his word," said Trillanes.

Sen. Teofisto Guingona III

SENATORS A10

Corona got PSM for services in Senate, House electoral tribunals / A12

Senate won't cite Gonzales for contempt

By Christian V. Esguerra

SENATE President Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday said the impeachment court would deny the motion to cite House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II in contempt for allegedly bullying a colleague who had testified for the defense panel.

"We have no authority to hold him in contempt," said Enrile, the presiding officer in the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato C. Corona.

"We are not a super court. We are an impeachment court performing a job. We are exercising a special jurisdiction," Enrile said.

Corona's lawyers earlier filed the motion after Gonzales (Nueva Ecija, 3rd District) moved to expel Nueva Ecija Rep. Teodoro Tiangco for defying the House leadership and testifying that allies of President Aquino, employing coercion, allegedly railroaded the impeachment

SENATE | A12

Prosecution: Defense witness seen arriving, leaving in SC car / A12

Is this an impeachable offense?

By Marlen Ramos

IS THE FAILURE of Chief Justice Renato Corona to correct his statement of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN) 20 years ago an impeachable offense?

Corona's lawyers yesterday moved to deflect the prosecution's claims that the inclusion of seven parcels of land in Marikina City in the Chief Justice's SALN in 1992—two years after the property was supposedly sold to his relatives—would support their allegation in the second impeachment article.

The second impeachment article accuses Corona of committing culpable violation of the Constitution for his failure to publicly disclose his SALN.

Jose Roy III, one of the defense counsels, also downplayed insinuations that the sale of the property in Marikina

IS THIS, A13

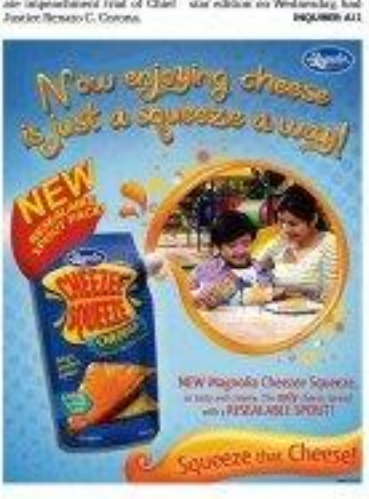
Deed of sale notarized by SC'V lawyer / A12

Inquirer apologizes to witness Vicente, readers

THE INQUIRER apologizes to its readers who took offense at the newspaper's use of a series of photographs of a defense witness, Demerito Vicente, who testified on Tuesday in the Senate impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato C. Corona.

The Inquirer yesterday issued a statement acknowledging that Vicente's photos, which appeared on the front page of the newspaper's two-star edition and on Page A28 of its one-star edition on Wednesday, had

INQUIRER A11



US researchers: Like humans, rats can make good decisions

WASHINGTON—Rats are smart, that's a well-known fact. But US researchers on Tuesday said a series of tests had shown they might be just as good as humans at juggling information in order to make the best decision.

The discovery could help scientists better understand how the brain works in order to help people with autism who have difficulty processing various stimuli the way that others can, said the study's authors.

Scientists at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory ran tests that presented rats with a variety of sound and visual cues, and analyzed how the rodents sifted through that information and recognized patterns in order to get a treat.

Comparing the rats to humans who were given similar tests, they found that both groups made decisions that were in line with the

RATS MAKE | A17

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6/49	
1st	23
2nd	14
3rd	30
SUPER 6/55	
1st	4
2nd	0
3rd	1

FOUR DIGIT (Tuesday)	
	9 4 8 7
MEGA 6/45	
	9 13 23 24 26 31
SUPER 6/55	
	P4,500,000.00
6/55 GRAND LOTTO	
	9 23 43 50 52 54
	P61,255,022.40

LOTTO: TAYO Two (04) LOTTO, valued at (044) PCSO draw

Palace braces for transport strike

By Christine O. Avendaño and Norman Bordadora

MALACAÑANG is bracing for the transport strike in Metro Manila today even as it warned the participating groups "not (to) cause harm to the riding public or to threaten or to prevent them from going about their daily business."

Presidential spokesperson Sonie Lacierda said the Palace is "preparing for contingencies" after Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Francis Tolentino failed to talk the transport groups out of their bid to go on strike.

"We are prepared for the transport strike—MMDA, Department of Public Works and Highways, the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police are all ready to provide assistance, making sure that the public will not be inconvenienced," he said at a press briefing.

He said the MMDA will be settling up a command center very early today to "ensure that the public will not be prejudiced by the transport strike."

Lacierda reminded franchise operators that they will have to face the consequence if anything should go wrong.

"That (franchise) is not a privilege, not a right. You have to be responsible for your actions. If you do participate, you will have to face consequences if any untoward incident happens," he said.

The Land Transportation and Franchising Regulatory Board (LTFRB) still has to make a decision on a joint petition from various jeepney and transport groups for a P2 increase in fares.

LTFRB board member Manuel Iway said the regulator would discuss the petitions and would likely have a decision before the end of the week. He did not rule out the possibility of the respondents being cleared if the transport groups fail to prove the urgency of the need to adjust rates.

The Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Taxpayer at Operator Nationwide (Piston) earlier said it would ask the LTFRB for a P1 hike in fares.

"Our goal is to help PUV drivers and their families to cope with the rise in the prices of oil and other basic commodities," Piston national president George San Mateo said in a statement.

Different groups gearing for the several-person arduous today to call for the scrapping of the value-added tax on fuel and price controls on petroleum products.

Fares and about 30 PISO, made up of motorcycle taxis and jeepneys, would participate in today's "transport tutorial" from Quezon City to the head office of Quezon Philippines in Makati.

San Mateo clarified that the group's protest action today was not a transport "strike" and that jeepneys around the country would not abandon their routes.

Data from the Department of Energy showed that diesel prices have risen by about P9.20 to P40 per liter since the start of the year. Gasoline pump prices have risen by P6 to P50 per liter in the same period.

Malacañang yesterday stressed that it was not prepared to give up the 12 percent value-added (VAT) on oil, rejecting a proposal from Sen. Ralph Recto to reduce the 12-percent VAT on oil to 10 percent so as to alleviate the effects of the unabated rise in oil prices.

Lacierda said the government needed the tax on oil to fund its social programs, like the conditional cash transfer (CCT) program.

"While the circumstances at that time (the tax) was imposed are different now, we need it to continue to fund our programs," he said.

Lacierda read a statement issued by Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima on why the government still has to maintain the 12-percent VAT on oil.

"He said one the dollar even though we have improved our fiscal position. We need to maintain to build a revenue base rather than go backwards. This way, our cost of borrowing will continue to go down creating more space for social investment," the Palace spokesperson said.

The military will deploy civil disturbance troops along with some of its trucks and buses to counter the planned transport strike today. With Pinsel G. Silvestre, Jr., and Owen Z. Mumbuan

PGH told to examine Ampatuan Sr.

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE JUDGE hearing the Maguindanao massacre case yesterday ordered the head of the Philippine General Hospital's pulmonology section to determine if former Maguindanao Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan Sr. has a life-threatening medical condition.

Quezon City Judge Jocelyn Solis-Reyes ordered Dr. Ma. Bella Simeon to examine Andal Sr. based on the recommendation of prosecutors after the accused was brought to the APP Medical Center V Lung General Hospital (APMC) in Quezon City after he complained.

After the PGH pulmonology section based examiners Andal Sr., the prosecution has been given 24 hours to file its comments on a defense motion for the court to allow Andal Sr. to remain at the APMC.

Independent doctor

Private prosecutors Harry Roque and Nena Santos both told the court that an "independent government doctor" should examine Andal Sr. to determine if he is really sick.

Instead of opposing, defense lawyer Sigfrid Fortun also joined the prosecution in asking the court to have the PGH doctor examine his client, who was scheduled to be arraigned today at the Pasay Regional Trial Court for election sabotage.

Andal Sr.'s concerned in the case—former President and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and former Commission on Elections (Comelec) chief Benjamin Abalos—have already been arraigned.

"We did not oppose the motion because he is not evading this up. [Andal Sr.'s] eyes even really red," said Fortun, adding that his client was still in the intensive care unit (ICU).

He said doctors have said that Andal Sr. was suffering from pneumonia, diabetes, a liver ailment and a heart condition.

Fortun, who is also representing the former Maguindanao governor in the election sabotage case, said he would seek the deferment of his client's arraignment at the Pasay court until Andal Sr. was ready.

Unable to speak

"We are also providing the court with his medical bulletin. He can't even speak. When I visited him, he was just nodding at us," Fortun said.

"He has had his dentures and a mechanical respirator attached to him. His doctors said [as of Tuesday night] that his condition was still guarded," the lawyer added.

However, private prosecutor Santos was not convinced and insisted that Simeon examine Ampatuan's condition.

"The timing of his hospitalization is suspect. He is supposed to be arraigned today! for the election sabotage case. We would like to have an independent doctor examine him," Santos said.

Also at the hearing yesterday, defense lawyers and prosecutors clashed anew about the witnesses the prosecution wanted to present.

To settle the conflict, Judge Reyes held a case management conference and both sides agreed that out of the list of 26 witnesses the prosecution wanted to present on the bail applications of the accused, five could readily testify in court.

The five witnesses included Lt. Gen. Raymundo Ferrer, the general who implemented martial law in Maguindanao after the massacre on Nov. 23, 2009.

The others in the list of 26 remaining witnesses would not testify as defense lawyers had pending petitions either before the Court of Appeals or the Supreme Court seeking to bar their testimony.

The trial at the Quezon City court will resume next Wednesday.

Gov't will import rice after all

THE GOVERNMENT has announced it has approved a proposal by Malacañang on its original plan to let the private sector import the entire 300,000-metric-ton rice buffer requirement for 2012.

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala yesterday said the government would now only "consider importing" 120,000 metric tons of rice from abroad under a government-to-government contract to fill the shortfall in the private sector importation program.

The National Food Authority (NFA) recently announced it was scheduled to bid only 300,000 metric tons of rice this month—to be divided equally between farmers' cooperatives and commercial rice traders. Krissy L. Aluro

GLOBE BUSINESS:

Creating Stronger Bonds and Lasting Relationships with iPhone 4S

By Chapin Medina

If there is any better way to bridge stronger, more lasting business relationships, the iPhone would certainly count on the top of the list. Which is why Globe Business made sure that its long list of local industrial, commercial and retail business partners were the first in line to get their hands on the iPhone 4S during its official launch last December in the Philippines.

Among all of Apple's extremely successful products, the iPhone 4S is perhaps the most talked about. Those in business who appreciate and expect more from a good smartphone know that the iPhone 4S allows its users to stay on top of the competition. And for this high level of expectation, Globe Business is committed to always provide what it does best: top speed and reliability of network.

Globe has always been a proud Apple partner since the launch of the first ever iPhone back in 2008. This successful partnership extends to the local business community through Globe Business, as it offers competitive iPhone 4S packages with unrivalled credibility for the country's leading small-, medium and large enterprises.

LOYALTY COUNTS

Loyal Globe subscribers got their hands on the Philippines' very first official units of the latest and most impressive incarnation of the iconic iPhone, which is packed with new features including Apple's dual-core A5 chip, iOS 5 mobile operating system, full 1080p HD resolution video recording, and Siri, the intelligent assistant that helps you get things done just by asking, among others.

In fact, top officials from the Embassy of Netherlands and The Café Mediterranean were among the first customers to receive their brand new iPhone 4S units, which were personally delivered to their headquarters.

"We are very pleased to receive the new iPhone 4S from Globe Business, our choice ICT partner at the Embassy of Netherlands," said Ambassador Robert Brinks.

"We, at the Café Mediterranean, are happy and satisfied with the way Globe Business handles our company's telecommunications requirements, from client servicing down to their after-sales support. This is the primary reason why we opted to get our iPhone 4S units from Globe," shared Maria Moreas of The Café Mediterranean (Zante of Restaurants).

The Embassy of Netherlands and Café Mediterranean are just a few of the satisfied Globe customers who are able to access the right after data plans and subscription features that are able to maximize the full functionality of the new iPhone 4S.

INDISPENSABLE

Business owners and busy professionals consider the iPhone as a part of their needs, were as they more instead they consider it as their tool to ever-new assignments. With the iPhone 4S's Siri, users get a more sophisticated virtual assistant that allows better communication with their colleagues, business partners, family and friends.

There is also a wider range of iPhone 4S apps (tasks it to almost indispensable tool for everyday living. And with Globe Business, there is always a reliable network for voice, data and connectivity here or abroad.

Globe Telecom is the first and largest partner of Apple in the Philippines, which is a decisive edge for the telecommunications company in having in-depth knowledge and unparalleled experience when it comes to using Apple mobile devices from iPhones to the iPad 2.

This partnership between Apple and Globe has been vital and tested through the years, and consumers greatly benefit from this partnership. This has allowed Globe to offer best-value deals for the complete iPhone and iPad product suites.

LATEST TECHNOLOGY

Apple mobile devices are a perfect match for the high level of technology, speed and reliability of the Globe Telecom network. In fact, the release of the iPhone 4S coincides with Globe's recently announced aggressive $700-million network modernization and ITO transformation program that will make the company's next-generation nationwide HSPA+ and 4G-enabled in the next two years.

The iPhone 4S works in perfect sync with the 4G mobile technology of Globe. And being the first in with our HSPA+ (Evolved High-Speed Packet Access) in the country, Globe cell sites and base stations will be in the best position to provide the best service to the most number of mobile consumer devices.

Realizing the value of HSPA+ and 4G technology, Globe continues to invest and fast-track its network transformation program, and to make it future-proofed and capable of using technologies like long-term evolution (LTE). 4G this, to delight the customer.

And what does iPhone 4S have in effect? The new iPhone model is full of amazing new features that make it even easier to stay on top of the business. Through voice commands, Siri, the built-in intelligent assistant, will be able to schedule or reschedule meetings, set reminders, send a message to a client, or even upload documents on-line to get to your next meeting.

STAYING IN CHARGE

iPhone users are able to stay in charge of their day with innovative new iOS 5 features like Notification Center and Reminders. From go-to apps like Mail, Calendar, Contacts, and Safari, with more ease than ever. And since iPhone 4S is a world phone, you can do business anywhere.

Notification Center allows the iPhone user to stay continually updated on all his business activities—from e-mails, texts, and calendar events to breaking news and stock reports. It's a convenient way of getting alerts on what's happening, and affecting, your business, all with just a single swipe. Alerts appear discreetly at the top of your screen throughout the day without interrupting your work.

With Mail on iPhone, it's easy to search for messages, and it keeps track of messages that need to be followed up. Furthermore, the smartphone has a feature that allows sensitive messages to be encrypted using by MDM. You can even add and delete mailbox folders directly from iPhone, and compose messages in offline mode.

There's more that can be accomplished with iPhone 4S's Calendar and Contacts. Get to see your schedule in a week view by simply rotating the screen to landscape mode. More meetings around and adjust that day's plan by simply tapping and dragging. The saving contacts from the corporate directory in the local address book on iPhone has never been so much easier.

Reminders on iPhone 4S is your best help when organizing your work day and staying in charge of all to-do items. Reminders allows easy tracking of tasks that need to be accomplished, including important details such as due dates and locations. Using location-based alerts, Reminders prompts the iPhone user as soon as he gets to his destination. And because Reminders is integrated with Exchange, CalDAV, and iCloud, any changes made are automatically updated on all connected devices.

With the dual-core A5 chip in iPhone 4S, connectivity to the Internet has become even more painless. iPhone 4S's new tech features enables faster page loading and improved graphics performance. Safari also includes new features such as tabbed browsing, so you can jump quickly from site to site, and Reading List, which lets you save web content to read later. For business users who need the right information at their fingertips at the right moments, Safari is on the job.

With iOS 5, you can wirelessly activate and set up your iPhone right out of the box, without connecting to a Mac or PC. You can also download free iOS software updates over the air, directly to your iPhone. Whether you're on a business trip, at a customer's office, or just away from your desk, iPhone keeps you conveniently up to date.

MORE

Make your daily work tasks easier with the extensive features that come with every iPhone. Send unlimited, secure text messages to other iOS 5 users with iMessage. Wirelessly stream presentations, photos, videos, and even mirror your apps on an external display using AirPlay. Make video calls to anyone using FaceTime. Find directions and pinpoint your destination with Maps. And take high quality photos for your business with the built-in 8 megapixel camera, even in low light conditions. iPhone and iOS 5 give you all the resources you need to make business better anywhere.

With all the marvellous features of iPhone 4S, Globe stands proud as a telecommunications company that truly understands what clients need and want and how the iPhone's awesome powers can help them.

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Own the most amazing iPhone yet. For more information, please contact your Globe Business Account Manager or call +63(2)730-1288. You may also send an e-mail to customersupport@globebusiness.com.ph for inquiries.

Corporate Sales Manager Ryan Fernandez, Corporate Marketing Manager Luke Herrmann, and Head of Corporate Sales Mark Tejada of Globe Business with Ambassador Robert Brinks, Deputy Head of Consular Section Dirk Cornelisse, Consular Officer Didem Güney of the Embassy of Netherlands

Ambassador Robert Brinks of the Embassy of Netherlands with Head of Corporate Sales Mark Tejada of Globe Business

Corporate Sales Manager Ryan Fernandez of Globe Business with Deputy Head of Consular Section Dirk Cornelisse of the Embassy of Netherlands

Senior Account Manager George Ortiz of Globe Business, Partner & Co-owner Maria Moreas of Café Mediterranean with head of corporate & SME segment Manny Alipala and Corporate Marketing Manager Luke Herrmann of Globe Business

Corporate Marketing Manager Luke Herrmann of Globe Business with Consular Officer Didem Güney of the Embassy of Netherlands

Head of Corporate & SME Segment Manny Alipala of Globe Business with partner & Co-owner Maria Moreas of The Café Mediterranean

BADGERED ON POLL AUTOMATION

Comelec chief blows top in House hearing

By Gil C. Cabacungan

COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) Chair Sixto Brillantes Jr. yesterday scolded lawmakers for badgering him about the lapses in the 2010 computerized elections committed by Smartmatic International Corp., that the government plans to tap again in the 2013 elections.

"All I have been hearing from all of you (are) the wrongs we committed in 2010," an exasperated Brillantes said to Congress. "Can we possibly talk about what we will do in 2013? I feel very bad about this. All I get (from you) are the mistakes we made. I hope somebody will come forward and offer a machine that will be perfect."

Lawmakers had besieged Brillantes with complaints over Smartmatic during yesterday's hearing of the committee on suffrage and electoral reforms.

2010 slip-ups

Among Brillantes's slip-ups in the 2010 elections are errors in the compact flash cards containing the list of voters and candidates in each precinct; the breakdown of some machines that resulted in delays in transmitting results to canvassing centers; and the failure of built-in ultraviolet mark readers in the precinct count optical scan (PCOS) machines to read the security marks in the ballots.

But Brillantes quickly apologized to members of the committee for his outburst after Quezon City Rep. Bernadette Herrera-Dy explained that the House members merely wanted an update on the Comelec's preparations for the 2013 elections, specifically on how Comelec plans to address the challenges of Smartmatic in the 2013 elections.

"Please excuse me for being hot-headed," he said. "I hope you will be more understanding of the Comelec which is different from the one in 2010 which made the mistakes. That is what I'm trying to convince. House understand the situation we are in."

Ticked off by columnist

Brillantes cited a recent piece by Philippine Daily Inquirer columnist Solita Monsod that portrayed him as "clueless."

Monsod was critical of the Comelec's decision to retain Smartmatic as its technology partner in the next election despite its shortcomings as noted by a House committee and local information technology groups. Civil society groups, Monsod wrote, should have "exercised their prudence and its P7.2-billion POES [automation equipment] with more reliable alternatives. She was surprised, she wrote, that the Comelec had decided to reward Smartmatic with another P1.3 billion contract—P709 million to procure ballot boxes and P560 million to deploy them. The contract was even priced, she added.

Comelec Commissioner Gus Lagman, who was seated beside Brillantes, admitted to providing Monsod with the information on Comelec's decision to retain Smartmatic, including how he was the lone dissenter to the Comelec plan.

Lagman said he had tried in vain to convince the Comelec en banc to IT partners. "I am the most oppressed in the group," he said of his share of detractors. "What the contract are wrong against me is coming from our sources. One of these days, I might decide to fold back," he said.

After 2013, poll winners can't serve without expense report

By Jocelyn R. Uy

AFTER the midterm elections next year, no winning local candidates will be allowed to hold public office unless they have filed their statements of campaign contributions and expenditures.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) yesterday signed a memorandum of agreement that would strictly enforce this campaign finance rule starting next year.

The pact covers elective officials, from governor down to members of the city council. Candidates for elective barangay office are exempted from the agreement.

In a press conference, Comelec Chair Sixto Brillantes Jr. explained that under the agreement, a winning candidate will have to present to DILG a certificate from the local election body, showing that he or she has complied with the provisions under Republic Act No. 7166.

Section 14 of the law requires candidates to file their statement of campaign contributions and expenditures before being sworn into office.

It states that every candidate and treasurer of a political party shall file with the offices of the Comelec "full, true and itemized" report of all campaign contributions and expenditures 20 days after election day.

Under the pact signed by the two agencies, "the winning candidate cannot enter into the exercise of his or her office" without certification of compliance from the Comelec.

"Before administering an oath of office to any winning candidate or allowing a winning candidate assumption into office, the DILG or any attached agency shall require him or her to present a certification from Comelec that he or she has satisfactorily complied with his or her obligations ..." read the memorandum of agreement.

In forging an agreement with the DILG, Comelec officials admitted that the law had not been faithfully followed in the previous elections.

"The procedure has been vague ... sometimes winning candidates would just tell the DILG that they have already filed (one) if they haven't and the latter would issue them in," Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez told reporters in Filipino yesterday.

"So what we did was to formalize the procedure so that the certification will be issued only after the Comelec proper's issuance of certificate if there is no satisfactory filing [of the required documents]," said Jimenez.

For his part, Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo said the pact between his office and the Comelec would hopefully curb blatant and extensive campaign spending by candidates.

The agreement reiterated that failure to file reports of electoral campaign contributions and expenses constitutes an administrative offense with a fine ranging from P1,000 to P50,000.

For second-time offenders, they will be meted out administrative fine from P2,000 to P40,000 and shall be subjected to perpetual disqualification from holding public office.

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Del Rosario meets Russian counterpart in Moscow visit

By Tina G. Santos

IN A HISTORIC bilateral meeting held in Moscow on Monday, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov agreed to further improve relations between the two countries, particularly in matters of political security, the fight against terrorism and transnational crime, trade, investment and tourism, migration, energy and culture.

According to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Del Rosario and Lavrov have "agreed to craft a joint plan of action that will chart their future relations in the next five years."

The Moscow visit, the DFA said, was a first by a Philippine foreign secretary to sit down, meet and inspect the yearlong celebration of 55 years of Philippine-Russian relations.

Del Rosario and Lavrov also discussed the challenges posed by maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region. "They agreed that the threats in this area should be approached using a rules-based regime based on transparency and diplomacy," the DFA said. "They affirmed their commitment to ensure freedom of navigation and other security issues in the region."

The Philippines considers Russia an important bilateral partner as it shares similar views in the United Nations, the East Asia Summit, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Asia-Europe Meeting and other regional groupings.

"These similar aspirations are based on both countries' adherence to sovereignty, territorial integrity and the maintenance of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region," the foreign office added.

The bilateral meeting was preceded by a smooth-laying ceremony at Alexandrovsky Garden, and was followed by a working lunch.

Mendoza, Herrera slug it out for TUCP control

By Jovarius Mirilla

THE TWO rival factions of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), said to be the country's largest workers' confederation with 1.2 million members, continue to clog it out.

The camps of rival presidents Ernesto Herrera and Democrito Mendoza are maintaining their support, claiming TUCP's more than 30 unions, federations and affiliates.

Herrera, a former senator and longtime secretary general of TUCP, claimed the presidency after the 69-year-old Mendoza resigned on Nov. 1. He is reported to be mobilizing his forces for a new convention.

Mendoza, who was reported to have been "persuaded again by other leaders to revoke his resignation," expelled Herrera. A statement from TUCP assistant general secretary Florian Nicdao warned that any convention called by Herrera would be illegal.

Herrera countered that his reported expulsion from the TUCP was "the handiwork of a usurper president, boner. And no legal bearing."

'Family feif'

Herrera, in a phone interview with the Inquirer, said the Mendoza faction wanted to make TUCP a "family feif" in a letter to TUCP members. He claimed Mendoza's reported withdrawal of his resignation was meant to give his sons Michael and Raymund "a chance to grab the leadership" of TUCP.

Herrera said with Mendoza's exit, founding members had reactivated membership in TUCP, such as the National Union of Bank Employees (NUBE), National Labor Union, Philippine Association of Free Labor Unions, Confederation of Filipino Workers, Pilipinas Federation of Labor Unions and the National Federation of Labor.

NUBE president Jose Umali, in a separate statement, said the union "unanimously supported" Herrera, adding, "We have waited for so long to see the end of the Mendoza-controlled TUCP tribal, at the very minute why NUBE distanced itself from it. Thirty-five years of undemocratic and family-motivated interests have been far too long for the Philippine labor movement to suffer. We welcome the ascension of Brother Herrera as TUCP president and expect that this will usher in a new dawn for the country's labor movement."

Bank union

The NUBE is the biggest labor organization of bank employees in the Philippines.

Nicdao said Herrera has resigned. All of his actions after Nov. 9, 2011, "when the TUCP executive board accepted his resignation are illegal," he said. Herrera called for any TUCP-related meeting, including the election of a new general secretary and other positions in TUCP, "illegal and null," in a statement.

On the other hand, the Mendoza camp warned its members against attending any convention convened by Herrera.

The Mendoza camp insisted the 80-year-old Nicdao remained the legal president.

The other day the Mendoza faction announced it had ousted Herrera and his allies from TUCP for betrayal, dishonesty and acts inimical to the group.

'No longer valid'

"Former Senator Herrera can no longer validly represent himself as TUCP in whatever capacity, and Nicdao is a statement.

Nicdao said they received information that the Herrera camp has reportedly scheduled a convention and election of new officers on March 16. He warned any TUCP union member who participates in the Herrera-convened meeting would be sanctioned.

"All of our affiliates must exercise propriety at all times because we are the biggest labor organization in the country," Nicdao pointed out. He said that the TUCP board is strictly protecting the organization from being politicized.

In his statement, Nicdao said he believed the animosity between Mendoza and Herrera could have been triggered by the decision of Malacañang to formalize the appointment of Purificación Quisumbing, a nominee recommended by Mendoza as representative to the Social Security Commission.

Nicdao said that Herrera recommended a different individual and even wrote a letter to President Aquino to express his disappointment over the President's decision to honor Mendoza's candidate.

"I do not understand why Mr. Herrera had to question the wisdom of the President."

Palace explains why foes are not getting their pork

By Norman Bordadora

LAWMAKERS who do not sign Palace-backed impeachment complaints could still participate in pork barrel funds but those who oppose the Aquino administration's programs may just find themselves bypassed when funds are parceled out their constituencies.

Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda yesterday said that while it is the Aquino administration's policy to make sure all congressional districts get the assistance they them from the national government, it would rather point the money directly into projects for the constituents of the lawmaker concerned instead of releasing the money as part of his or her principal development assistance fund (PDAF) or pork barrel.

"The position of the administration is that no one should be left behind," Lacierda said.

He cited as an example of this the case of Zambales Rep. Mitzigmos Magsaysay, an opposition party member who earlier complained that the Aquino administration has withheld her pork barrel funds.

Straight to the people

"There are those who are like Rep. Mitzi Magsaysay. She is against the administration, she is against the policies. Our concern is if you're not helping us in our programs, in our policies, we might as well go straight to your constituents and help the constituents," he said.

Lacierda said doing so does not deprive the constituents of the lawmaker of their assistance from the national government just through the pork barrel funds.

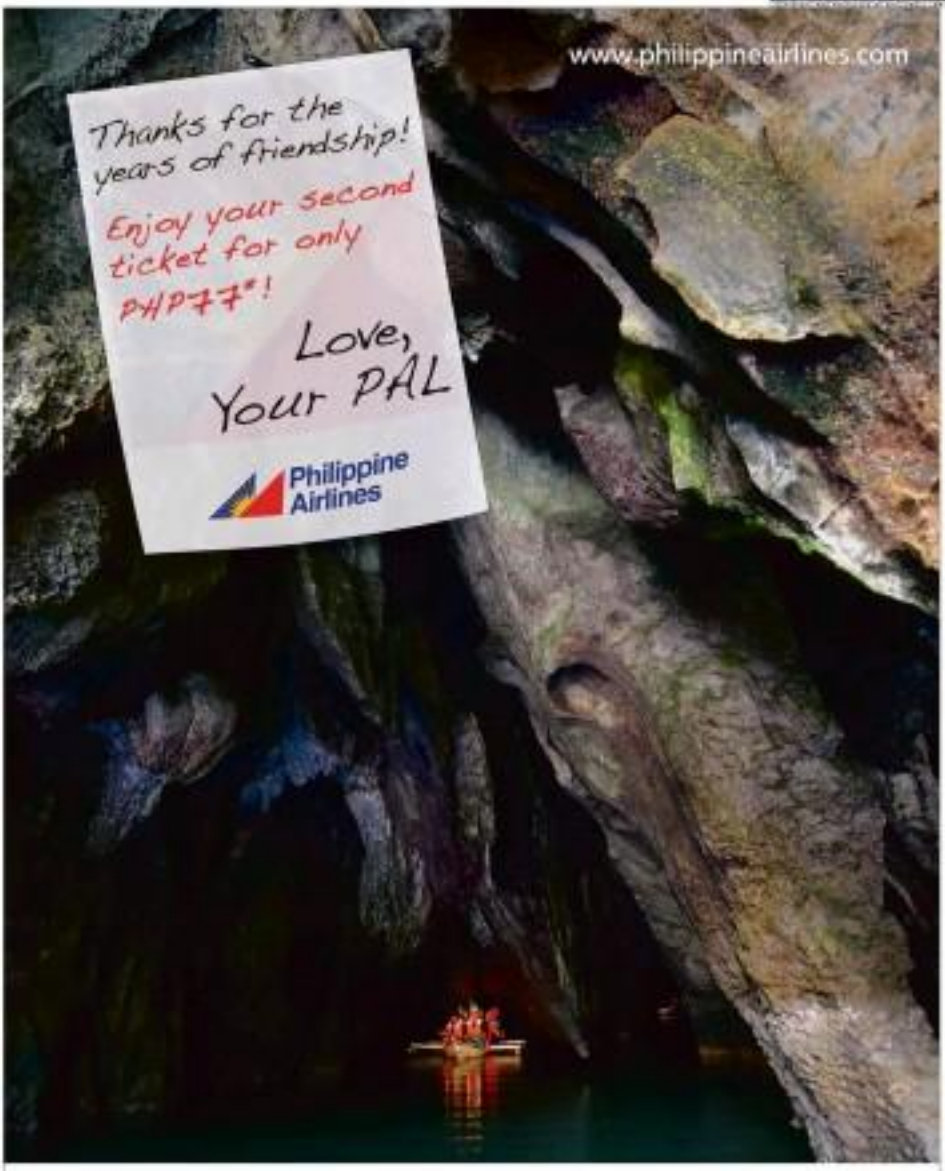
"So that's being done. So there's no issue on the constituents themselves being helped," Lacierda said.

In an earlier response to a question on one message, Budget Secretary Florencio Abad said instead of impeaching Solicitor General Francis Jardeleza, Comelec Chairman Sixto Brillantes Jr., Ombudsman Conchita Carpio-Morales and Chief Justice Renato Corona, the President should instead focus on the economy.

Abad said the impeachment complaint against the three Ombudsman Abeverdizon Gutierrez last year.

The Kuwentong lawmakers volunteered to testify as a witness for the defense of the impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona. He also did not sign the Corona impeachment complaint despite being a member of the House majority bloc.

Tiangco said the delay in the release of his PDAF in 2011 affected his scholarship awarded to pay the school fees when they enrolled in June. He said his PDAF for scholarships was released months later.



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Corrections

IN THE MAR. 13 ISSUE, a story on Page A6—"Iggy laid to rest, finally"—erroneously referred to Atienza as one of the daughters of Abdi Asenjo. Atienza is the eldest daughter of the late Spouse Occidental Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Asenjo with his first wife, Marilyn Jacinto.

* * *

IN THE MAR. 11 ISSUE, Patricio Evangelista's "McDiet to Madness" column on Page A15 of the Opinion section—"The biggest gainer"—misstated the birthplace of a Quiapo beggar named Sarasvinia. He was born Nov. 20, 1964, in the Tacuatian Hut in Isnod of Calumbuyan pagan—Ian Calacuba.

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FOR 'VERY PRIVATE REASONS'

Weather bureau chief quits

By Tarra Quismundo

THE MAN who took over the weather bureau following the controversial sacking of its longtime chief has quit, opting to refine to government perches abroad" with cryptic reforms in the country's atomic-warning and disaster preparedness system.

Graciano Yumul, undersecretary for research and development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and supervising official of the weather bureau, has opted to retire early after serving government for 28 years.

Yumul filed for early retirement "for very private personal reasons" on Monday, according to Science Secretary Mario Montejo.

28 years of service

"It is with deep regret that I accept the decision of Undersecretary Graciano P. Yumul Jr. to seek optional retirement from government service due to personal reasons," Montejo said in a statement yesterday.

"With almost 28 years of service in government, Undersecretary Yumul's career path includes scientific and executive tasks handled by excellence and dedication and duly recognized by peers from government, academe and the private sector," Montejo said.

While keeping Yumul's reasons confidential, DOST said his decision to leave government service was purely personal and was not due to any job-related problems.

Yumul announced his retirement in a brief [illegible] sent to reporters yesterday. "Hence, be informed that starting March 12, 2012, I have optionally retired from government service. Thank you very much for all your help and I hope you keep supporting DOST," the letter said.

Yumul's retirement ended his seven-month stint as the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), to which he was appointed on August 2011, in the time, he was the DOST's chief for research and development since 2008.

A geologist, Yumul briefly served as officer in charge of the bureau after President Aquino sacked longtime Pagasa chief Prisco Nilo following the weather bureau's allegedly faulty tracking of Typhoon "Basyang" in July 2010.

Aquino had been dissatisfied with the bureau's forecast on Basyang, which was first reported to directly hit Northern Luzon but instead brought heavy rains and strong winds to Metro Manila.

Yumul then took on special assignment as supervising undersecretary for Pagasa when Montejo appointed Nathaniel Servando as the new Pagasa administrator in February 2011.

During his tenure at Pagasa, Yumul set daily weather bulletins to reporters and also appeared in live broadcast of weather updates.

Servando remains Pagasa administrator while Amelia Guevara, executive director of the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development, was appointed officer in charge of DOST's research and development office.

Award-winning research

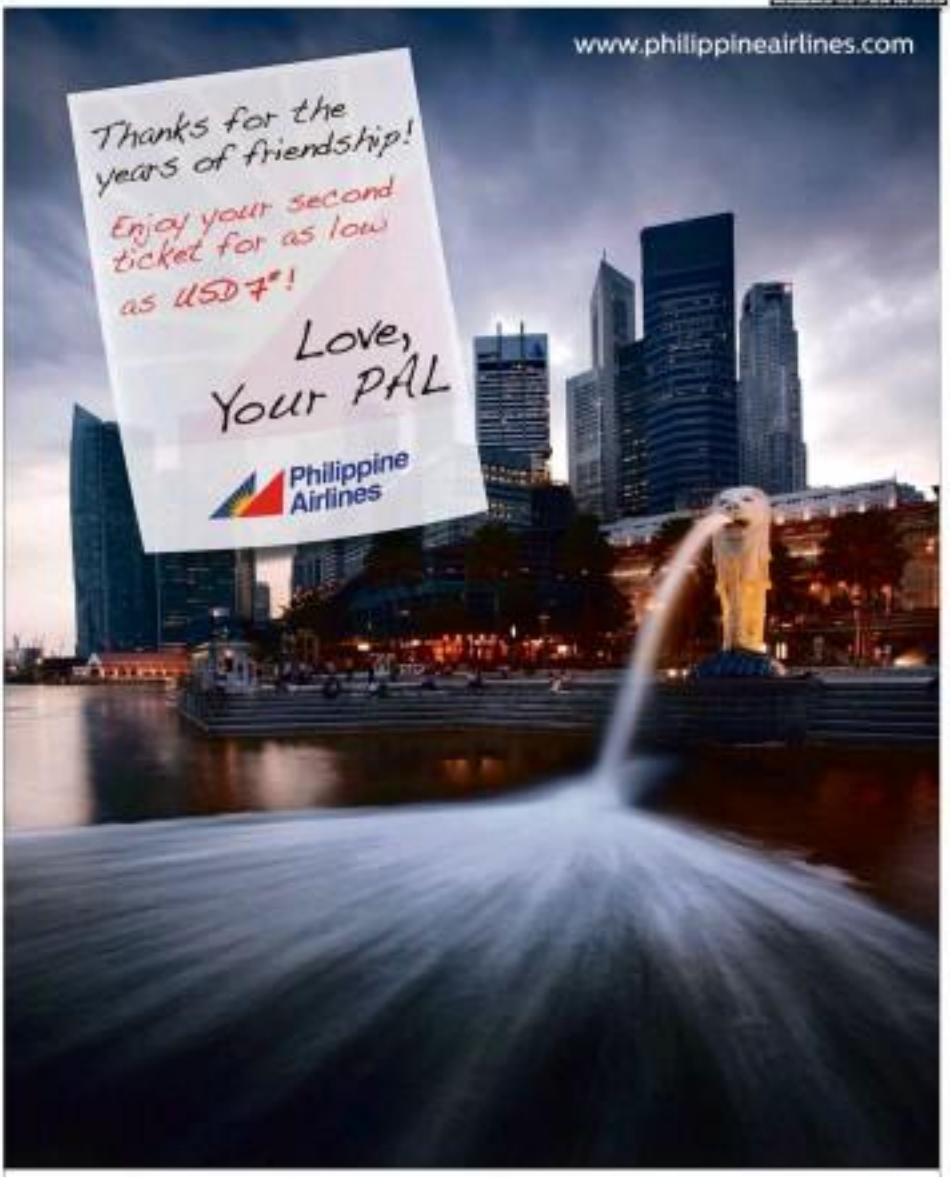
Yumul started his civil service after graduating from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman in 1980 with a degree in geology. He took up postgraduate studies at the University of Tokyo, and the University of Bretagne Occidentale in France.

He also taught at UP and served as associate dean of the UP College of Science and also as director of the UP National Institute of Geological Sciences.

He has earned several awards for his research work in the geosciences.

Presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda yesterday said there was "no politics" involved in Yumul's early retirement.

"There is no issue on the retirement of Usec Yumul," said Lacierda, adding that the DOST was still looking for a replacement for Yumul. With Christine O. Avendaño



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Defense complains prosecution 'lost' its document

By TJ Burgonio

WHO'S got the documents?

Day 29 of the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona yesterday began with lead defense counsel, Serafin Cuevas, complaining that a document borrowed by private prosecutor Jose Justiniano the other day was missing.

The documents were Cristina Corona's handwritten letter acknowledging receipt of transfer of certificate titles covering seven parcels of land in Marikina City that she sold to Demetrio Vicente in 1998 for P500,000, and a deed of sale between Vicente and Miriam Ibars.

"It was borrowed by Lawyer Jose Justiniano. After the trial, the said document has been returned, and has not been returned. He (the) is have a talk with Attorney Justiniano but there was no satisfactory explanation," Cuevas said at the start of the hearing.

Justiniano confirmed borrowing a "bunch of documents" from the defense panel in Tuesday's hearing, but he said he did not notice that this included the "receipt."

'Ethical implications'

He asked for time for the prosecution's team to locate the document.

Cuevas said this was "ethical implications," the presiding officer of the trial, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, ordered the prosecution to immediately "look for the document."

After three hours of hearing, the prosecution could not produce the documents. The prosecutors said the documents could have been placed in one of their cars and asked the driver in letting the car to the Senate. Sen. Gen. Franklin Drilon's counsel, Estelito Mendoza, said prosecutors and defense agreed to confer with one another on how to find the documents.

Vicente, 70, a relative of Corona, testified on Tuesday that he purchased the seven parcels of land in Marikina City with a total land area of 1,700 square meters for P500,000 in 1998 from Cristina. He also said he purchased another 1,700 sqm from Cristina's sister Milagros Ibars.

Under cross-examination, Vicente confirmed that the property owners were still in Cristina's name, and as was the tax declaration. He said he had no more money to pay for the transfer of titles. He has been paying real property taxes in Cristina's name since 1998.

The prosecution produced a certification from a Makati City court showing that the deed of absolute sale between Cristina and Marina was notarized by an "unlicensed" notary public in 1998. Vicente confirmed that Corona stood as one of the witnesses.

Earlier, Cuevas was the defense witness for the second impeachment article, which accuses Corona of failing to disclose his statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN), and failing to disclose his assets in the SALN.

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We're ready to face Basa family in court but..., says CJ counsel

JOSE ROY III: Complaints of Basas irrelevant

By Marlon Ramos

THE DEFENSE panel yesterday expressed its readiness to take on members of the Basa family as possible rebuttal witnesses for the prosecution in the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona in the Senate.

But Jose Roy III, one of Corona's lawyers, played down the weight of the would-be testimonies of Ana Basa and Mabel Basa-Chua who had accused Corona of using his position to gerrymander a Supreme Court ruling in favor of Chua who is married to Corona's brother Ricardo.

Roy said the complaints of the Basas... are irrelevant. They have nothing to do with the Chief Justice," Roy told reporters before the start of the impeachment trial.

"They were no longer stockholders or maybe, never were. You will find that out when we can get to that point—that the full ownership of [RGS] belongs to the Coronas," he said.

On Tuesday, Corona's lawyers asked the Senate impeachment court to summon Ana—not just herself of a Quezon City court which handled the libel case that Cristina filed against her relatives involving their ownership dispute over RGS.

Real status of firm

The move may have given the prosecution an opportunity to present the Basas as witnesses in its rebuttal.

But Roy said the motion would not necessarily allow the prosecution of the Basas because the rules of the Supreme Court's officials would only cover the extension of RGS as a judicial entity.

He noted that the prosecution had presented an official of the Securities and Exchange Commission who testified that RGS had been dissolved.

"The pendency of this case and the actions taken by the court ... will show what is the real status of this corporation," Roy said.

"If they feel that the Basas would provide good rebuttal evidence, that's up to them. But as the (Senate's) keeps reminding us, the only jurisdiction of this court is impeachment. It cannot review what happened in a corporate dispute," he added.

Asked if the defense was prepared to face the testimony of the Basas, he replied: "Sure. We've been waiting to have a chance to cross-examine these people who have been extolled the Chief Justice."

Deed of sale notarized by SGV lawyer, says Corona wife

CRISTINA CORONA: We didn't use him (SGV) [sic]

By Jerome Aning

CHIEF Justice Renato Corona's wife Cristina yesterday said the deed of sale of the property in Marikina City she sold to her husband's second cousin in 1998 was notarized by a lawyer from an accounting firm based in Makati City.

The prosecution panel claims that the lawyer was not authorized to be a notary public.

The non-notary public is Attorney Beth Mumaylan who used to notarize the documents in [the accounting firm] SGV. When she resigned from SGV, she joined Romulo Mabanta Law Office which assigned her to Hong Kong for many years. She has since married a Hongkong and had two board children living in Hongkong. Until will feel husband," Cristina said in a text message sent to reporters.

Cristina said the Marikina property was sold "through a broker who brought Demetrio Vicente to my house as her buyer."

"Even if the buyer turned out to be a relative of my husband, we paid the broker's fee because we did not sell it directly to him. Since we sold the property to him in 1998, we didn't see him again until 2011 when I was told that the title of this property was still in my name," she said.

Cristina said Vicente's wife Lilia was the first cousin of Emmy Morales, husband of Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, who according to Vicente, had been to his house.

"If they feel that the Basas would provide good rebuttal evidence, that's up to them. But as the (Senate's) keeps reminding us, the only jurisdiction of this court is impeachment. It cannot review what happened in a corporate dispute," he added.

Asked if the defense was prepared to face the testimony of the Basas, he replied: "Sure. We've been waiting to have a chance to cross-examine these people who have been extolled the Chief Justice."

Senators await Corona; CJ testimony not yet a necessity, says Cuevas

From page A1

noted that Corona's dollar deposits were not disclosed in his statements of assets, liabilities and net worth (SALN).

"The thing that I would like to find out then is how come the dollar account is not declared in the SALN?" Gutierrez asked Cuevas.

Sen. Serafin Lacson said that evidence earlier presented by the prosecution panel created "doubt in my mind at least that there was a basis for the impeachment complaint."

"Now this is more tempting because I want to hear your explanation and that doubt in my mind could go away if your explanation or the explanation of your client would be good," Lacson told Cuevas.

Wait for evidence

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, the presiding officer in the impeachment trial, reminded his colleagues to "wait for the completion of evidence existing from the defense before we discuss these things."

Cuevas told Gutierrez that there was still "no necessity" to reveal details of Corona's dollar deposits, noting that the senators could not be divulged without the respondent's consent.

Philippine Savings Bank also has a pending petition asking the Supreme Court to prevent the impeachment court from scrutinizing the dollar deposits. The court has issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) in the meantime.

Under questioning by Tolentino, Cuevas said he had only been told about Corona's peccadilloes in media but that the Chief Justice would disclose details of his dollar accounts.

"But I will go on record as not having stated that we will present his wife when we call foreign currency deposits," Cuevas said.

On whether Corona himself should face the impeachment court, Cuevas said: "I have no concrete and positively answer at that ultimate conclusion. That will depend on the progress of the proceedings and the nature of our evidence or the stages at which our evidence may be."

"If the prosecution has not even established a prima facie case against the respondent, then I do not think we have to place

ARRAIGNED: Corona is still open to a plea bargain

him on the stand," he added.

Williams said he would remind the defense "every now and then" about Corona's "promise."

Corona's vow

"Whether or not there was a TRO from the Supreme Court, I said I will open it in due time and the due time is now," Williams said. "I have no problem with no dollar deposits because I can explain it," Corona had said in an interview one month on March 7.

Cuevas, however, apparently feigned ignorance, saying that he "may be acting as eloquent" when the Chief Justice issued this statement.

Senators spent a portion of yesterday's trial questioning the relevance of the testimony of defense witness Ronnel Dayaga.

Sen. Francis Escudero sought the statement of effect.

Dayaga on Tuesday testified that Corona had earned P12.6 million in salaries, allowances and other benefits as a member of the Supreme Court from 2002 to 2011.

Tolentino asked Cuevas if the defense was trying to prove that Corona's bank deposits were not "ill-gotten."

He reminded the counsel that the Senate earlier ruled that the prosecution could not present evidence on alleged ill-gotten wealth because it is not alleged in the second article of impeachment.—Corona's al. legal failure to publicly disclose his SALN.

"I have not gone that far," the lawyer replied.

Income, assets

Cuevas said Dayaga's testimony was "very relevant because if the other amounts of compensation ... goes into the coffers of the chief Justice, then it only explains the alleged deficiencies brought about by the evidence of the prosecution that he could not have acquired this amount of properties because his income does not justify the acquisitions thereof."

Sen. Teofisto Guingona sought to establish the source of Dayaga's income.

Senate Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano asked about the "intimacies between [Corona's] income and his declaration in the SALN."

"If you're just trying to show to the public that he is not corrupt and that he had sources of income to acquire the properties, I understand that, but that is not the issue in court," the senator said.

Cuevas replied: "We will be discussing that point in the light against not only through the testimony of this witness [Dayaga], but there are other witnesses that we will be presenting to counter that with the additional income."

"This is not the totality of the evidence for the defense to allow us to establish the culpability of the honorable Chief Justice," he added. With a report from Michael Lim Ubac

Is sale of Marikina land an impeachable offense?

From page B1

Heights to Corona's cousin, Demetrio Vicente, may have been bogus since the 1,700-square-meter property remained registered in the name of Corona's wife Cristina.

"What does his SALN in 1992 have to do with the impeachment now? Obviously, we're not going to impeach him (Corona) for something he did in 1992 ... while he was holding a different position," Roy said in an interview before the impeachment proceedings.

"Let's remember the impeachments is for firmate. Corona as Chief Justice. If I not even close to me that were committed before he become Chief Justice should be part of his process," he added.

Recto query

Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr. asked Serafin Cuevas, Corona's lead counsel, why the Chief Justice included in his SALN in 1992 the parcels of land in Marikina if Vicente had already bought them.

Roy said that what the Chief Justice listed in his SALN in 1992 already referred to the Corona couple's property in Ayala Heights, also in Marikina, and not the seven parcels of lands in Marikina Heights.

"Unfortunately we were not able to point that out [on Tuesday], but this will be proven. You can check the records. The description of the SALN is general," he said.

Just a caretaker

The defense panel also took exception to the claim of Bobi Tiglao that Corona is the true beneficial owner of the Vicente property.

Karen Jimeno, also of the defense, denied allegations that the Coronas could have hired a fake notary public and a forger. Never just to cover up the anomalous notary public the transaction between Vicente and Cristina was still effective and binding.

According to Salvador, a notarized deed of sale or any written or similar agreement only documents "if a public document is executed and that it has effect among the owned as."

"Would that mean that the sale was invalid? It's not. A deed of sale notarization would be the problem of the notary public, so the sale may be charged," he said, adding: "That's not the problem of the person who notarized the notary public."

'Very strong family culture'

But why did Vicente allow the property to remain registered in Cristina's name if he was able to pay real property taxes and finance the construction of his house?

Roy said it must be because of the Filipinos' "very strong family culture" which, he said, may have also caused the ill among Cristina's relatives over the control of Basa Builder Enterprises Inc.

"I think that's why sometimes families end up fighting because we're closely knit and you can't avoid that [some will] for differences of opinion," he said.

"When you buy something from your relatives, you really don't expect that there will be trouble. If there's no difference or money of bad faith or ill will, you don't expect your relatives to lay around and resume that sale."

Corona's lawyers also defended Vicente from inference, also questioning his credibility, saying his "straightforward" replies to the grilling of the prosecution team showed that he was telling the truth."

Saul Lukadamo: "One can tell if he was telling the truth with the way he testified. (Vicente) was there for some time and he was very consistent with his testimony. So, he knows the documents to be executed and were guided the lawyers to identify those."

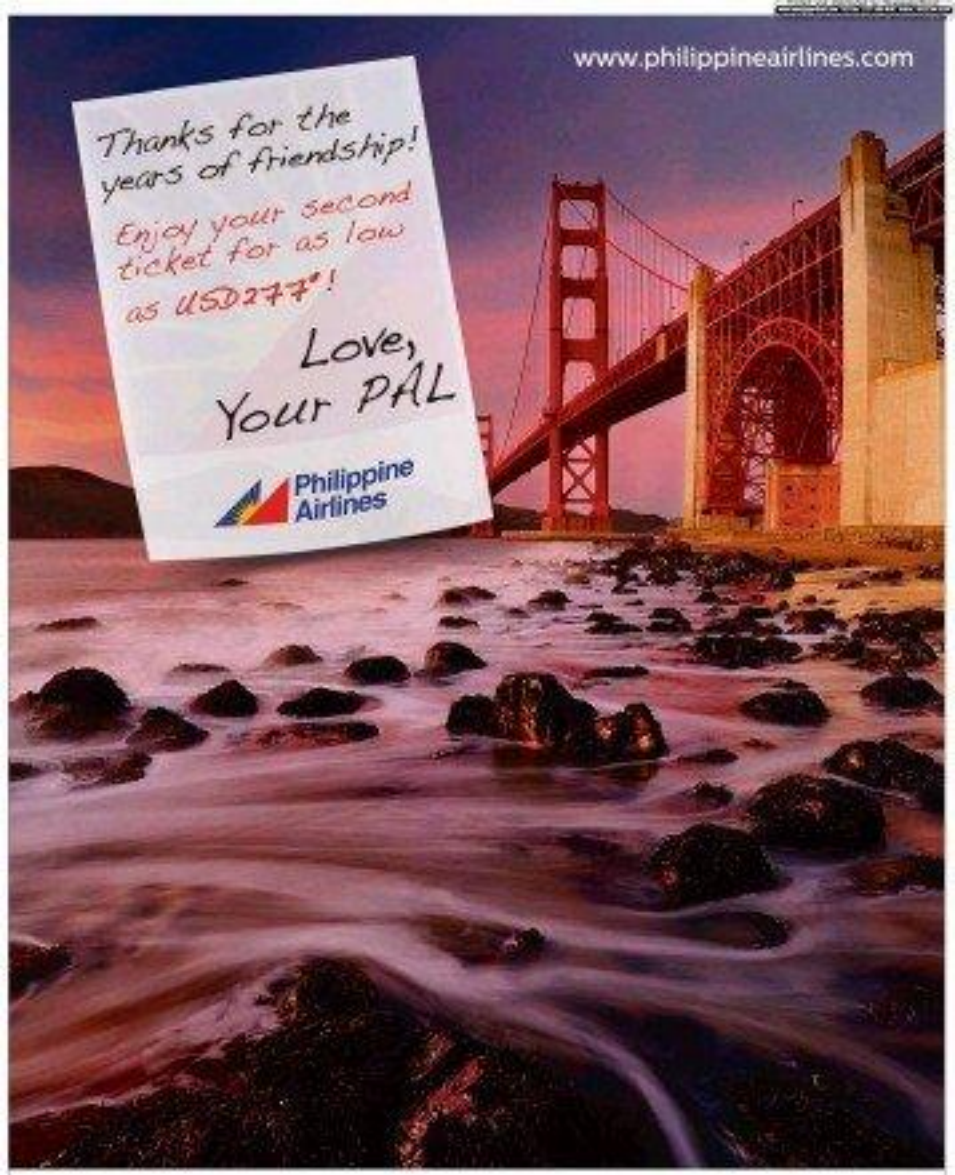
Roy said it was expected that the prosecution would cast doubt on Vicente's credibility since he appeared in support of the Chief Justice's defense.

"There will always be doubts on the part of the prosecution and the people who are against the Chief Justice. I'm sorry if the documentation does not meet their standard, but the fact remains that the witness was straightforward," Roy said.

Visit Vicente in Manila

The outspoken lawyer then dared Marikina Rep. Miro Quimbo and the media to pay a visit to Vicente in Manila "to see and for all who love them."

"Why don't you make out a caravan there and find out who lives there? By the way, that house is in the district of Quimbo. Maybe he can assist us in determining the truth," Roy said.



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Prosecution: Defense witness seen arriving, leaving in SC car

By Cynthia D. Balana

PROSECUTION spokesperson yesterday decried Chief Justice Renato Corona's use of government resources for his defense in the impeachment trial in the Senate.

In a press conference, Makati Rep. Rumores Quimbo said defense witness Jeremiah M. Belgica, a private individual and Corona's second cousin, arrived in and left the Senate on Tuesday in a beige 1996 Toyota Camry with plate No. XKJ 993 which is normally use to be registered as an official vehicle of the Supreme Court.

It was Inday News that took a video of Vicente's departure from the Senate using the same car.

During the trial on Tuesday, Belgica said he brought seven parcels of land in Bukidnon City from Corona's wife Cristina in 1990.

"Certainly, the Chief Justice is entitled to his defense and in fact, he has lawyers already defending him. But it is important just like any person, who is a respondent in a case pursuant to the performance of his public functions, he has not to use the resources of his office," Quimbo said.

"The resources of the Supreme Court are being used to force witnesses to and for, by minutes of a resolution pertaining to the misuse of government funds," he said.

Quimbo said there are different 3 components, acting as prosecutors in an impeachment case, are government-owned vehicles so they were performing a constitutional duty.

He challenged Corona to take actions of absence in order to produce other members of the Supreme Court from any accusation of bias.

P-Noy ally finds Vicente credible witness

MS. SUZY of President Aquino yesterday said he found Jeremiah Vicente "credible" after confirming from sources that the witness indeed was living on the property that was still registered in the name of Ma. Cristina Corona.

"He answers, the consistency, he seemed to know what he was doing. He was quite sure of his facts. He was not perfect, which indicates a parrot of truth. And I confirmed with certain people if he lived there, and they said 'yes.' They have visited him there [in Bukidnon City]," said Sen. Sonjo Osmeña III.

The senator, a gardening aficionado, also joked that Vicente's credibility was strengthened by the fact that "he likes [tomato] and I like tomato."

"He's one of his [Corona's] has one of the largest collections of bonsai. That's why he has a big lot—3,400 square meters," Osmeña added.

Best bonsai artist

"I was wondering (of the size of his lot) money) what on earth anybody would need with 3,400 square meters. (I learned) it's full of bonsai. And (Vicente) is one of the best bonsai artists in the country," the senator said.

Osmeña also said he was willing to overlook Vicente's failure to register the property in his name despite his acquisition of eight parcels of land from Cristina and her sister more than 20 years ago.

"I have relatives whose properties are still under the names of their grandmothers. That's a matter of laziness. And yes, it happens in this country," the senator said.

Gutty C. Fernando

DEFENSE witness Jeremiah C. Vicente testifies at the impeachment trial of his second cousin, Chief Justice Renato Corona, on Tuesday. SENATE PHOTO

Inquirer apologizes to Vicente, readers

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offended some of its readers.

"For this, we sincerely apologize. It is not our intention to disparage Mr. Vicente in any way," the Inquirer said on its official Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Its comments posted on the two major social networking sites, a number of readers described as "insensitive," "tasteless," "mean" and "cruel" the newspaper's use of the photographs—as well as the accompanying captions—that tended to highlight the effects of a stroke on the face of the witness.

Corona got ₱5M for services in Senate, House electoral tribunals

By TJ Burgonio

CHIEF JUSTICE Renato Corona received close to P5 million in allowances while serving in the Senate and House electoral tribunals, two defense witnesses said yesterday.

Irene Guevarra, secretary of the Senate Electoral Tribunal (SET), told the impeachment court that Corona received P1.6 million in monthly stipends as honorary consultant and miscellaneous expenses, and allowable expenses as member of the body from February 2004 to April 2009.

Erlito Balaoila, secretary of the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET), said that Corona received P3.3 million in similar allowances when he served as a member there from January 2007 to February 2008, and from April 2009 to November 2009, and as chair from November 2009 to May 2010, or a total of four years.

Allowances in SALN?

Hearing this, Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, the presiding officer, noted that each year should be reflected in the statement of assets, liabilities and networth (SALN) of Corona.

Defense lawyer Jose Roy III apologized Guevarra and Balaoila to prove that the Chief Justice had other sources of income to purchase real estate properties.

Guevarra, a lawyer and dean of Corona at the Ateneo de Manila University College of Law who topped the bar in 1981, said Corona and SET members each received a monthly stipend allowance of P50,000, a reimbursement for monthly cellphone and miscellaneous expenses of P35,166.67 and reimbursement for monthly additional allowable expenses of P82,000, or a total P323,166.67.

In the 16 months in SET membership, Corona received a total of P1,096,333.38. He was among three justices and six accusers who constituted the tribunal, she said.

Not income, taxable

Under cross-examination by private prosecutor Atty. Demosthenes Hermosisima, Guevarra said the monthly expense allowance was an allowance, and this was not liquidated but was justified by a certification reflected in the official payroll.

"We did not consider it income and did not withhold taxes on [them]," Guevarra said.

The correspondents and miscellaneous expenses said allowable expenses are of the nature similar to the representation allowance, and their disbursement was accompanied by a certification to the payroll, she added.

"These are reimbursements for expenses that the chair or the member should have expended for his office in relation to his duties as a member of the tribunal," Guevarra said.

Not for personal use

Asked if Corona could use the three allowances for his personal use, she said that "under the law, that should be the case."

Guevarra said that the monthly expense allowance belonged to the personal services category, while the two others fall under the maintenance and other operating expenditures.

But Ralph Recto said the monthly allowance could be taken home, while two others "should be spent."

Balaoila, for his part, said Corona received some P1,104,622.93 for his 21-month service as HRET member, and P803,794.93, for his five-month-long chairmanship of the tribunal, or a total of P1,908,400.86.

Reimbursements

He confirmed that these were not taxable. He said that a certification was necessary for Corona to claim reimbursements for the extraordinary and miscellaneous expenses and allowable expenses.

The HRET is composed of three Supreme Court justices and six members of the House.

Hermosisima suggested that Balaoila's last name was misspelled to show that the Chief Justice had the capacity to purchase assets that did not appear in his SALN. But he noted that a significant portion of the more than P12 million that Corona had received consisted of allowances that had specific allocations.

Corona's transportation allowance, for example, should have gone to the purchase of gasoline for his vehicle. Representation allowances, on the other hand, should have been used as payment to restaurants where Corona ate.

"He earned pocket these amounts," Hermosisima said.

Jumbled

In his testimony on Monday, Supreme Court budget officer Antonio Bayuga said Corona received a total of P21,696,781.45 in salaries, allowances and other benefits from the time he was appointed associate justice in 2003 until last year.

Of this total, Corona's salary only amounted to P5,872,805.82.

During cross-examination yesterday, Bayuga reiterated that among the allowances Corona received include personal economic relief allowance (Pera), representation allowance, transportation allowance (Rata) as well as enactment and miscellaneous expenses.

Bayuga also admitted under the allowances included representative for "public relations, meetings and seminars."

Tumble or fit's all jumbled together?, Bayuga replied.

Hernandez said even Corona's subscription to professional journals should be reflected in the liquidation of these allowances.

"The Chief Justice must submit proof of liquidation. These are the allowances intended for subscriptions for personal utilities. He has to make an accounting of where these were spent," Hernandez asserted.

Not for vacations

Bayuga said that the liquidation was included in a "payroll" submitted yearly to the Commission on Audit.

"The Supreme Court's practice is to submit (the liquidation) through an additional payroll," the witness said.

Hernandez went on to point out that allowances earmarked for specific purposes "cannot be used for vacations abroad. It has to be used for the office. He cannot put it in his personal bank account because the funds are not really his." With reports from Cathy Rosauro and Cynthia D. Balana

Senate won't cite Gonzales for contempt; we're not super court, says Enrile

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complaint against Corona during assassination of Sen. Ninoy Aquino.

Even if Gonzales claimed he was merely offering an "advice" to Tiangco, defense lawyers sought to have him cited in contempt. They said they did so to "both protect and vindicate Tiangco in our witnesses and more importantly, to protect the rights of the Chief Justice."

"Any effort to prevent or discourage witnesses from appearing to give court assistance is destroying the performance and conduct of the judicial function," according to the five-page motion.

In his testimony on Monday, Tiangco recounted how House leaders led by Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. gathered some congressmen at Gonzales' house on Dec. 12 and instructed them to sign the impeachment complaint that same day.

Nondebatable

Tiangco said he refused to sign the complaint because the House leaders did not show any documents or proof to back any of the allegations. He said he was also irked after Belmonte informed the group that the matter was "nondebatable."

"I cannot sign (the complaint) without reading it (first)," Tiangco told the court. "I felt it was an attempt to control or to scare the Supreme Court. It's not a simple impeachment of the Chief Justice."

The witness also decried statements by Majority Leader Gonzales.

"Every time the minority stands up he will say 'you are out of order' and not for the ruling of the House, and we will be declared out of order. At least the public will see the behavior of Gonzales is the same behavior that he is showing in the session hall during our deliberation of such measures," Pua said.

He preferred that a majority of the House members would act like a "herd" and vote to compel Tiangco because Gonzales would conjure up "millions of reasons" to seal him.

Pandora's box

Tumbokon Pua, Mikaela Bingayayan and Gonzales' move exposed "cracks" in the majority's coalition. "This will open a Pandora's box and I don't think Malacañang will be prepared for the consequences."

A number of lawmakers who signed the impeachment complaint did not like Tiangco's appearance in the Senate but they believed it was not enough to merit expulsion.

Quezon City Rep. Winnie Castelo, a member of the Liberal Party, said that every lawmaker had the right to express one's opinion even if it was contrary to the majority's view because that was the essence of a democracy.

"Although I do not agree with his action, it does not warrant expulsion," Castelo said.

Bishop for truth

Cubao-san Bishop Honesto Ongtioco urged reporters yesterday that if Tiangco testified "for the truth, it is pleasing to God. In such a case, there is command the congressman for coming out."

Rojano said that an investigation must be initiated on Tiangco's claim that pork barrel funds of the Philippine Veterans Investment Fund (PVIF), was dumped in lump congressmen to sign the articles of impeachment against Corona.

"It's also good to look at that angle because it was brought up by a witness, it does not make it so," the private said, stressing that the pork barrel, which should benefit lawmakers' constituents, should not be used for personal agenda or political motives.

"We have to be objective. We have to withhold it," he added. With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan and Jocelyn R. Uy

Strike 3 vs designated PH envoy to China at confirmation hearings

From page A1

China first believed to be rash in all dispatch.

"Pag [China representative] made statements where China signed the Order. They said 'we notify but we do not agree with the following,'" Osmeña noted.

Just before this, Lee said China was among the 166 countries that sent signatories to the Charter.

"That's something, 'pero mali-mi' they don't agree with that," Lee told Osmeña.

"What were those articles?" the senator asked.

"That's not included in those ... articles ... title of the law of the sea. Concerning the waters," Lee replied.

Weak in English

Criticisms had been heaped on Malacañang's decision to appoint Lee as ambassador to China, one reason that has become evident during his appearances in the CA hearings is his inability to express himself in English.

Lee dismissed this issue at his second confirmation hearing in late 2011.

He said then that his proficiency in Chinese would be a greater advantage and that he had even served as unofficial translator for then President Joseph Estrada when he visited China.

Lee also boasted in a book that he was "the godson of the reigning Supreme Sy," who is the personal grandfather and namesake of the President.

"Mr. Ambassador, you are guessing. This is for Charles," Osmeña said. He then showed Lee a copy of the voluminous agreement about two inches thick.

The senator told Lee that those responsible for the agreement "sure drove them before they finalized this convention. China acceded to the convention made later (in) 1996. But they did have an exception. They said 'we agree but as to articles nos. bar to and no. 14, 15, 16, ...'"

"Are you familiar with those reservations ...," Lee replied. "I do not agree to."

Osmeña challenged.

"I have to start from the beginning," Lee answered.

"Before do your homework again. Then was the only action China would agree to," the senator said.

"Because they have their own interpretation ...," Lee replied.

"I don't care what their reservation. They said 'we take exception to so and so, subsections 1, 2, 3 of that particular article. What was that?" Osmeña asked again.

"They signed Unclos," Lee muttered to explain.

"It's already ratified and then they find out this sixth word is not supposed to be applied for," he added. Osmeña smiled but shook his head in disbelief.

"Not acceptable to them because of interpretation of treaty to island," Lee concluded.

Very specific

"The exception was very specific. They want to amend a subsection and I want to know if you know that. Obviously you don't," Osmeña observed.

"I will take note of that," Lee replied.

At one point, Cottabato Sur Rep. Jojo Villaflores raised his hand and complained that he could not understand Lee's answers in English.

"Which language are you more comfortable with? Would you prefer to answer in Chinese so you'd gain an advantage over Osmeña?," he asked, causing laughter in the Senate session room where the confirmation hearing was being held.

Normally, I have no problem with that," Lee said in English and Filipino.

"In lieu of English, it's different not in Tagalog. But I do not look at a piece of paper to be prompted like who (Osmeña) does. It's all in my mind (what one says to) he," he added.

"But how do we understand?" Villaflores asked.

"I would also not be able to explain it in Tagalog. It's not the only," the ambassador replied.

So, if I will only be answering one question, I would not ask any more questions," the congressman said with compassion.

At one point, Osmeña dished the conversation to the Spratly issue, particularly on the sole that being proposed by the Philippines to solve the dispute among the claimants.

"Where was this issue last discussed among the foreign ministers of (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations)? When was it held," the senator asked.

"Moment? Or Malaysia? I don't want to guess," Lee said.

He added that he did not attend the meeting since "I am not considered official ambassador yet."

'Strictly confidential'

Osmeña asked other officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to join them at the table. The department officials said most of the details about the Spratly issue could not be discussed in executive session.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson pointed out that the senior national defense committee that he chairs also held an executive session with the DFA about the Spratly issue.

"It is strictly confidential," he said, in defense of the DFA's request.

Osmeña and Cayetano Sen. Pedro Bernabe eventually moved to defer Lee's confirmation.

Philex eyes investments in Burma mines

THE PHILIPPINES' largest gold miner said on Wednesday it is keen to invest in Burma (also known as Myanmar) as the former military-ruled state makes tentative political reforms and woos to lure investors with its riches.

Philex Mining Corp. has sent representatives to Burma in recent weeks to look at opportunities and to reserve the best mineral claims, company senior vice president Michael Toledo told Agence France Presse.

"Burma is opening up and a lot of businessmen are really looking at that country. We do not want to be left behind," he said.

He said Philex was eyeing metallic minerals and rare minerals and gas exploration, but did not disclose which local companies they were dealing with.

"We are looking at the regulatory framework, the political landscape. Some business is run there, who are the people to talk to. This is the regular due diligence that companies do," Toledo said.

The company, which posted a record net income of P6.9 billion in 2011, is also eyeing investments in gold and copper in Indonesia, Toledo said.

He stressed the talks were exploratory and that no commitments had been made.

Burma has embarked on a course of political reform, including the release of democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

It has also installed a quasi-civilian government, and allowed Suu Kyi to run in parliamentary elections in April.

As a reward and to encourage further opening up, the United States and Europe have begun easing economic sanctions imposed on Burma for its rights abuses.

The Philippines has called for the same.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday - March 15, 2012
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jer 7:23-28

Thus says Yahweh, "Our thing I did command them: Listen to my voice and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in the way I command you, and it will go well with you. But they did not listen and paid no attention; they followed the bad habits of their stubborn heart and turned away from me.

From the time I brought their forebearers out of Egypt until this day I have continually sent them my servants, the prophets, but this still enriched people did not listen. They paid no attention and were worse than their forebearers.

You may say all these things to them but they will not listen; you will call them but they will not answer. This is a nation that did not obey Yahweh and refused to be disciplined; truth has perished and is no longer heard from their lips."

Gospel: Luke 11:14-23

One day Jesus was driving out a dumb demon. When the demon had been driven out, the dumb person could speak, and the people were amazed. But some of them said, "It is through our demons by the power of Beelzebul, the chief of the demons, that he is able to put him to the test by asking him for a heavenly sign.

But Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided by civil war is on the road to ruin, and will fall. If Satan also is divided, his empire is coming to an end. How can you say that I drive out demons by calling upon Beelzebul? If I drive them out by Beelzebul, by whom do your fellow-countrymen drive out demons? They will be your judges then.

"But suppose I drive out demons by the finger of God; would not this mean that the Kingdom of God has come upon you? As long as the strong and armed man guards his house, his goods are safe. But when a stronger one attacks and overcomes him, the challenger takes away all the weapons he relied on and disposes of his spoils.

"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me, scatters."

Reflection

Jesus was fully human, and would not be a denial of his identity to think that he did many things in that historical, "ordinary" way that some people believed that it was the power of Beelzebul that Jesus cast out demons. This amounted to a claim that his life was split in two that he was possessed by a power that was using him for its own purposes. Jesus is not divided against himself; nor was it the kingdom of Beelzebul divided against itself. It is by the exalted power of God that he casts out demons, not by some schizoid self-destructive power. It is possessed by the Holy Spirit is not like other kinds of possession. It is to be exploited in fact, so that there is no difference between what he does and what God does.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Ripe for reckoning

EDITORIAL

THE CONTROVERSY over the $328-million National Broadband Network deal between the Philippine government and China's ZTE Corp. has yet to see closure no matter that it was ultimately scuttled and much water has since flowed under the bridge. Testimonies of greed that necessitated expert "mitigation" and of money-making so aggressive that it would not be ignored even in a million of excuse ("bahala-ka") have yet to vanish into the innermost of collective memory. Indeed, the NBN-ZTE deal, with its purported overprice of $130 million to cover bribes, the payment of which was to have been shouldered by Filipino taxpayers, is one of the scandals that require just resolution if the Aquino administration is to make good on its anticorruption promise.

The arrest warrants issued on Tuesday by the Sandiganbayan on former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband Mike Arroyo, former Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos and former Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza raise the possibility of the matter being settled once and for all. The project to install a high-speed telecommunications network linking government agencies nationwide, actually a logical undertaking in a country aspiring to firm up a niche among the developing nations, was such a glaring involving top-drawer personalities that it collapsed under the weight of all that subterfuge and dealing. The base losses of it appear to be that highly placed operatives peddled the project cost to get the enterprise going and make all the concerned parties happy except that an important character balked at finding himself the odd man out and forthwith blew the whistle. As in a morality play that began the unraveling, aided by the astoundingly bold abduction of a state who knows where the bodies are buried, to, to speak. Now, after being smoked under by the flurries of other scandals, all but lost in the nether world of unfinished business, the case seems ripe for reckoning.

It's about time. Recall that the sordid details came to light in a Senate investigation late in 2007 that enjoyed live media coverage and intense public attention, much like today's impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona. There as now, crucial points in the narrative—for example, conversations occurring in the golf games ostensibly used as occasions for persons of influence to pull rank ("Back off!") or turn on the charm ("Sir, may 2010 ka ito")—emerged to be pieced together, producing a familiar tale of huge sums of money and the wielding of great power. With all that has been said and the initial raises filed, never mind that two against Arroyo and her husband were dropped by the Office of the Ombudsman in August 2009 (for insufficiency against suit and absence of evidence, respectively), would attentive observers not name the suspicion that a posh-bah such as Abalos was fronting for the then first couple? Why would the eminent chair be involved in a communications project, in the first place, if not for the gravy train? (The man stood to earn a commission of more than $500 million, according to the Senate testimony of government consultant Rodolfo Lozada Jr.) And why would Arroyo tear herself away from the side of her then gravely ill husband in April 2007 to fly to China to witness the signing of the contract despite being informed earlier by then Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri of Abalos' purported bribe offer to ensure the deal's approval?

Arroyo scrapped the NBN-ZTE contract five months later, in September 2007, as a concession to loud allegations of bribery and of her husband's meddling in the big-ticket project. But it's clear her questions to be posed—and answered—including the not insignificant matter of why she agreed to a golf game and then some with ZTE officials at the company's headquarters in China in 2006, when the proposed deal was still being appraised by her administration. It's time for Neri to break his puzzling silence on Arroyo and to explain his own golf games and other meetings with Abalos even after the latter's purported bribe offer. It's time for Mike Arroyo to definitively disprove the moneybags tag. Yes, call in the rest of the dramatis personae—the Jose de Venecias (father and son), the ZTE officials, Mendoza and the major and minor communications officials concerned, Lozada, even then Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez.

It's time to begin to clear the murky aeons of government contracts and the Byzantine ways with which taxpayers get shafted.

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The return of the mother tongue

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

SOMETHING IS about to happen in Philippine education that may have a deep and enduring impact not only on the intellectual development of Filipino children but on their relationship with their communities as well. The Department of Education announced recently that from June this year, when the new school year opens, any of 12 major local languages spoken in different regions of the country will be taught as a subject and used as a medium of instruction from kindergarten to Grade 3. These would initially known as "Mother Tongue-Based Multi-Lingual Education" (MTB-MLE), as part of the K+12 basic education reform program. The new schemes has yielded positive results in 921 schools across the country where it has been piloted.

The English term "Local" and "vernacular" studies have shown that using the language used at home (mother tongue) inside the classroom during the learners' early years of schooling produces better and faster learners who can easily adapt to learn a second (Filipino) and third (English) language. This is an insight that has long been documented by students at the University of the Philippines Integrated School. But it has taken a while for it to gain traction in an educational system that remains headed to the English language.

The 12 mother tongues that will soon be introduced for classroom use are Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Tausug, Maguindanaon, Maranao, and Chabacano. The mother tongue of a given region will be employed in all learning areas, except in the teaching of Filipino and English subjects. Introduced in the pilot schools during the first semester of Grade 1 in school and Basic, while English will be offered as a subject in the second semester of Grade 1. I am not in million with the specifics of the program, but I expect that provisions have been made for those children in which most of the students come from migrant families whose mother tongue is different from that spoken in the region.

The fundamental change will require the production of new teaching materials and materials using local languages that have long been unexplored as formal tools of communication and education. Those who were in grade school and high school in the 1950s will remember how local languages, except Tagalog, were regularly banned from school premises. It was a crazy era when pupils who made the mistake of shifting to the local "dialect" in a moment of panic during classroom recitation were routinely fined for the "offense." I don't think that experience necessarily made us better speakers of English. But it certainly developed in us a strong bonded skepticism about the value of our own languages and the ways of life to which they were embedded.

I have always believed that to speak a language is to be a member of a community; by speaking its language, we participate in the community's existing consciousness. The need to speak it is no longer a compulsion because we use it to communicate with that community. Looking back at those years, I now believe that, instead of strengthening the ties between school and community, English-based basic education had the effect of restricting our connection to our communities. This is the main argument of the Ateneo literary imagined the ideal relationship between the school and society. By imparting English as a medium of instruction, our schools were, in a sense, producing a nation of strangers—individuals unfamiliar to or uninterested in the places in which they were supposedly rooted. The cultural alignments that many young Filipinos feel today may have stemmed largely from the instructional purging of mother tongues from the streets of our national life.

Fortunately, one never really loses one's mother tongue. All it takes to reactivate it as a faculty is to listen to others speak it. Those days when we all lived in provincial towns and villages it was a barrier to total inter-communication. We can, without much effort, become instantly reconnected to a groups around the world that are devoted to promoting the use of our mother tongues. It is a wonderful irony that globalization is motivating local languages.

For, the years of neglect are quickly borne by the language itself. Mother tongues get stunted when they are not used, particularly when they are no longer written. Most people complain that some languages are not complex enough to express certain ideas. But this is precisely the way that languages do not grow by themselves. "It's my language," says Steven Pinker, "... as one stands under scrutiny. Despite the lamentations of language lovers and the coercion of tongue troopers, languages change unstoppably as people need to talk about new things or convey new attitudes."

As a native speaker of Kapampangan, I look forward to the literary resurgence that the return of the mother tongue to our schools may trigger. The writing of teaching materials using our indigenous languages should definitely spawn a renewed interest in local history and culture. It will instill pride in our beginnings, and hopefully lift our nation from the morass of democratic noise in which it has long been stuck.

All this may or may not have been certain planned by the English school, it is enough that the language has for its principal goal the liberation of our children from the double burden of acquiring basic concepts using a language they are learning for the first time. Still, there is no doubt in my mind that the shift to a mother tongue in the early years of formal schooling will have far-reaching consequences not only for Philippine education, but also for the way we think of ourselves as creatives.

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Irrelevant

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

TOMAS TAWED I struck a heroic pose last Monday, the bad broken cracks with his defenses, he said, in capitos is deep-seated wrong. That was the impeachment of Renato Corona. That was not the product of reckless conspiracy led by Speaker Feliciano Belmonte.

He himself, Tamayo said, would have gone along with it "eyes closed" but balked upon seeing it had no "probable cause." He added: "I understand probable cause as the probability that you could find what he is being accused of. How could I be convinced if there was no document or proof being presented?"

Tamayo counsels a heroic pose but blending, but he succeeded only in looking like a clown. At the very least, all he showed with his apparent ignorance was how deficient he is in understanding the issues before him. Probable cause is not the standard for conviction in the senate's Court of Impeachment. It is the standard for the senate's Court, everyone is banned from telling the world what he knows). In Belmonte's House, everyone is free to hand his head off at the mouth by Corona's Court, everyone must bow down to the wishes of the crowds. In Belmonte's House, everyone may hilariously follow his conscience. Corona's Court courts contempt. Belmonte's House houses freedom.

While at this, Belmonte's House sounds like a respectable democratic Corona's Court sounds like a medieval witch hunt.

But Tamayo of course goes beyond Belmonte to suggest that it's Pnoy himself who's behind the conspiracy. Which follows the Corona-Arroyo camp's mantra that P-Noy is so power-mad he wants to control the three branches of government and will do everything to his power to do it. Do they have the right person in mind? Still, are they in their right minds?

Who are they dared fling, P-Noy or Gloria Arroyo? Who was in power and she rode the wave and clung on to power like a leech? Who wielded powers so ruthlessly she spanked every impeachment bid against her—after discovering that by government official could testify she stole the vote—and even coerced antagonistic elected officials from their posts? Any fiscal knows that very well, he surely became a victim of it after Bonnie Tsai bore down on Makati with millions to try to oust him. Fortunately, Binay had built a strong in for a firefight. Pnoy blinked, and withdrew.

In the very case, all Tamayo showed with his arguments that he found no "probable cause" was that he doesn't read the newspapers or watch the news on TV. Well, Senator you know better to him for the next election. Why should you continue yourself solely to the documents the impeachment bidders submit to know what's happening? You know—or should know, being a congressman who ought to be abreast of his times—that the Supreme Court had issued a TRO commanding Malacañang's order for immigration to stop anyone from leaving the country. You know—or should know, building as you do a post that requires knowledge of reading and writing—that Malacañang had been accusing Corona, Arroyo's midnight appointee, of ruling prejudicially in her favor. And the impeachment comes to you as a surprise?

It's one thing to disagree with impeachment bidders' arguments and say that they seem to be weak. It's another to say there's no probable cause. The one is the product of mere thought, the other of plain ignorance. Indeed, it's one thing to say that the TRO is an outrage in modern and does not constitute a pattern of late justifying impeachment. It's another to say an impeachment case has been wrong upon Congress out of nowhere and the congressmen who voted for it were just possessed. The one is the product of personal judgment, the other a projecting one's ignorance upon others.

The fact that Tamayo was willing to sign the impeachment complaint "eyes closed" before he changed his mind indicates the quality of his mind before and after change. It does not reality others, it indicts him.

But all this is a tempest in a teacup. Which brings us to what's gone horribly wrong with the impeachment trial. It's become, well, a tempest in a teacup. It's become so important to see how as something happening in Ghana. It's become as central to our lives as a theological debate on how many angels can fit on the head of a pin. All that building about the defense's coming out party only to produce this? Only to bring us back to technicalities?

Tamayo's tacit proposition that in any probable cause you have to ignore the world and concentrate only on the documents of impeachment is all of a piece with the defense's tacit proposition that to see probable culpability you have to ignore the world and concentrate only on what the impeachment court allows you to see, to confer to see probable crime, you have to forget that Corona is corrupt. Jurdeen Jubilee wealth in dollars, and has invited Supreme Court justices to his home, and that he should not be dismissed—and from only on hoping the predicate, talking like lawyers, and crying "Habol" In order to see probable evil, you have to forget what the Bonns have revealed about Corona and wife, you have to listen only to the defense's version of the Bonns' testimonies.

Elsewhere in the world, there's not called rule of law that is called the sad wagging the dog. It is not reality that must bow down to the demands of the impeachment court, it is the impeachment court that must have down to the demands of reality. It is not social discourse that must conform to the marginal concerns of the impeachment court, it is the impeachment court that must yield to the central concerns of social discourse. It is not law that defines justice, it is justice that defines the law.

The world has moved on while the defense was preparing its opening in brief. The impeachment court doesn't know itself to catch up with it and it will soon find itself, if indeed it hasn't done so already.

Irrelevant.

The House of political prostitutes

"If I felt I were near that robber, it is the second old set of profession. I have learned that it bears a striking resemblance to the first."

That famous quote from the late JV President Ronald Reagan can't be more appropriate for the House of Representatives, which has become so lost in their pursuit to become a body providing, with the appropriate use, the sole constitutional role, but going all the way for, President Aquino and his economic program to make our Chief Justice Renato Corona.

At the impeachment trial on Monday, Rep. Tobias Reyes, a longtime congressman, painted a vivid, sometimes picture of how Speaker Feliciano Belmonte, the House Appropriations committee chair Rep. Jose Emilio Abaya, and Budget Secretary Florencio Abad got the congressmen to railroad within a day Corona's impeachment through, threats of withholding their pork barrel if they refused to sign the complaint. The trial's lawyers, Manuel Quezon Jr. and Rico Quicho, immediately pounced on the rebel congressmen, threatening to expel him from the House if he testified at the trial.

A despicable group in this land has been Congress' Left parties led by Bayan Muna, which joined the plot to take out or Chief Justice who spearheaded the fight against corruption in Bicutan from the decades-old Archer of Aquino's close friend Gloria Lamia, whose many of its critics have been killed by the plutocrat's security force.

The entire impeachment saga reminds one of that biblical struggle of converting sinners to sheep's clothing, as the House of Representatives is the House of Deception. Rather than a noble crusade against corruption, the campaign to take out Corona is proof-positive for those goals: torpedo the Supreme Court to order P1.6 billion paid to the Cojuangco-Paz Mariendo Lanuza, brother-in-law of President Aquino's mother Cory, and Aquino's other persons—to replace Antonio Bautista with Liberal Party president Mar Roxas as the republic's vice president through the latter's ongoing electoral protest; and get the founder of The Manila Times—now the most powerful and richest legal hero in the country—to become chief justice.

Tongue, who was with the political opposition during President Aquino's term, has publicly said that Belmonte told the congressmen in that has really called meeting that Corona must be impeached "to be a protégé of GMA" (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo)." As if listening to school children, Belmonte declared that no questions will be entertained, that the impeachment complaint is still being written, and that they should just line up to sign without attending to their agreement to the move.

According to Tongson's testimony, the impeachment of Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez was not a day out. In late-out Corona. It was in this regard to have the impeachment of Corona to stop that congressmen who will not support the move to impeach Gutierrez will get "zero as in zero" (Hal Ubiñeta: Development Assistant Funds) as the pork barrel released for the purpose of such congressman to his district. Sure enough, because of Tongson's refusal to sign Gutierrez's impeachment complaint, his pork barrel was withheld, and released only after he publicly turned bell on the impeach. Abad had turned him that it was Mr. Aquino who orders the release of pork barrel for such congressmen.

Talk of the devil: he is a congress. When he is not more in this paper with the headline "Pork not to be impeachment" was, in Belmonte's Philippine Star, Abad's press release published nearly in toto, denying the congressman's allegations, and found itself "Tongue get full pork." To designate the role

Don't mess up LB

I titled home in Los Baños.

My birth certificate says it all started at 12:57 a.m. on Nov. 14, 1985, in one of the rooms of my granny's place on Bangkal Street. My dad told me more than once that he used to ride me to the shore of Laguna Lake (which is still part of the town) before dawn when I was a baby, so I could take in the breeze which is supposed to invigorate a young soul.

Growing up in Los Baños meant being raised in simplicity. At a child I ate my fill of fish and rice, going out to a retail store to buy a kilo of rice or shampoo or what have you. Occasionally, my family would visit my uncle's place and sleep over. That street is called Gumaca Gardens, and inclined we passed through a green land with rainbow grazing. On weekdays, I would exclusively wait back home from school to watching favorite shows.

Limited amusements like being outdoors, however, because I was loud, not only a TV person and a bookworm. But when I was much older, I suffered by the unassuming of several loud children and discovered the walking routes in Los Baños appealed to my nerve. During such times, which was about a decade ago, whenever I had to cross the main roads downtown, I would first glance around the establishments, the people, and the weapons, and appreciate how my town maintained its simplicity and quaintness despite having mentioned some decades ago.

Back then I felt the peace in my town even if I knew some parts of it were deep-infested and even if I could see a lot of puppies. Myself named that the people of Los Baños, despite being considered a first-class urban municipality, still represented the ruralness for environmental of this country—one who only knows the place in the city is contained and equipped to appreciate and dominate metropolises, jobs, structures, and income spherical and optimistic—I thought the town was safe and protected. And hope.

It came back to the town in 2006 after spending exchange student program in Japan and entered the University of the Philippines Los Baños as an Agriculture. Days in the town were different, except for the upswings of rambunctious nightspots and that complex of bars and food establishments called Lil' Square. I had heard of street crimes in these town. If true, one can still hope the incidents had been settled.

Then darkness Gonzales came into the picture. He was in the 2010 elections, elected as mayor, and after that, all the hells were hurled at him, such as disdain on his being whom this Los Baños resident, his rumored motive of merely leaving the town, and the alleged diversion of public funds from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. formerly chaired by his father Dioscoro to the Gonzales-owned Tolentino College, which is also in Los Baños. (The specific allegation that the money school was channeled by Efrain Gonzales, Trust College banned the aquatic events in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games' still its Olympic-sized swimming pool.)

Many viewed the father like the way Gonzales ran his electoral campaign. My group doled out napkins, rice and chicken to residents in the 2010 polls, and I was one of the many members of Mayoralty, My group's kid did find when the and other senior citizens attended one of Gonzales's campaign gatherings, they were made to stand up and pledge their votes to him. (He even received a chicken cake from the candidate on their birthday.

Opinions were the mirrored post.

The truth is that the names and I know each other, as I have hosted the Mr. Los Baños pageant thrice. I have joked him about his plans to improve his education, livelihood and health of the townsfolk, and urged him to deliver on those evidently. He came up with an answer that he could not of the three matters, and I was left with doubt. I was told that the Gonzales' term wasn't here passed, and the last thing you do as your people is to make them wait.

Today, about 100 lampposts line the road leading to the UPLB campus, bestowing pink light at nighttime. An iniquous columned clause the lampposts were installed by Pagsa members and the Gonzales' wife. A huge statement is also set on the same road, called UP Gateway, is under construction. By the standards of Western moderately three projects, ought to sound really promising. I look at those projects and I'm frankly puzzled as to how this evolving face of Los Baños and its commercial dynamics could possibly benefit its residents, my own people, especially in the long run. For starters, are the lampposts necessary? Are the ordinary Los Baños citizens being met by the local government?

Then the matches. The last did not final well before Grace Limasac, the 19-year-old BSBA computer science student who was raped and murdered on the dark and grassy road of the Institute of Plant Breeding on campus on Dec. 11, 2011. The second was Jeffrey Cruz, the UPLB sophomore of Arts Broward Dalisay, 19, was landed to death heart ago after being held up on EO. Gomez St., Brush Subdivision. The culprit got away with nothing.

And as if these numbers in the town were not enough for a week, a 32-year-old resident of Barong Malabo was stabbed to death by her husband, Jeffrey Cruz, in their home on Dr. Dionisio Hospital. This occurred at 6:30 p.m. on the same day Fernando was killed.

Public anger at the state of Los Baños is all over the social media. UPLB students, in particular, are upbeat at the town's administration's inability to provide effective and conclusive security measures to the people. Some even say that the killings serving as the last straw in the accumulating discontent with the mayor, local residents may outlive remaining in the night in search, "Gonzales, solve us, please me."

Hell hath no fury like a people denied principled leadership. And hell hath no fury like a people deprived of a decent Los Baños.

Indeed, Los Baños is beset town. I claim to simple and quaint aspects, which have marked my life from the get-go. I claim to responsible, sustainable and equitable progress. Just last year I returned to the shore of Laguna Lake where my father used to take me as a baby. It was midnight, and no one else was there. It was very quiet, peaceful, refreshing to the senses tapping in the shore and enjoying the breeze.

And what I claim is that there is hope of decency. That is a town you don't just come up.

Lilian Pluta, 23, is a development communication student at UP Los Baños and the president (chief teacher) of the UP Community Broadcasters' Society.

The original 'hamog' boys

APRIL 1, 1996, would have been just another ordinary day for Teddy Bernardo and Gene Rivera, an unlikely duo by a profession suddenly spun their lives for such adventure. But that day the two teenagers were suddenly forged friends.

They decided to go to Old City de Quezon City, a town's three away from the San Roque slums where they lived. It was close to noon when they spotted 14-year-old Oliver Ong, a scholar at the nearby Philippine Science High School, prying for his pencil at Teddy's. He was already late.

"We were not inside Teddy's," recalled one of the two boys when I interviewed them in the Quezon City jail. "We were outside watching him through the glass panel." When Oliver stepped out, Gene and Teddy walked close to him. Gene was famous for his "hamog" style: he quietly hemmed Cutter pal his arm around Oliver's shoulder. "Tahimik lang," he said.

Gene and Teddy had blanked weapons, slightly hidden, but close enough for Oliver to feel. The victim only spoke and passed other people with, not calling attention. He was not told that a boy next to him held up. He was not told that the end of the corner looked different, that he looked every inch a school boy.

"We were not wearing rugged clothes," Gene said, "but we were wearing slippers, sabsaleta." People failed to notice that something was wrong.

Taking Oliver some distance away from where they got him was not difficult. Gene and Teddy described to me the route they took (which I would later recall through my own) pictures in my ill hippocampus. Teddy's short memory described to me till this crime scene. Nakatago (name the killer intervention suburb last traffic lights on the street to the bus stop. (Then Shooting where Wendy's was located but since gone way to a much bigger Jollibee.)

The three crossed lights and went toward the old Panorama Theater. There the Radio Station to music) they turned left until they reached a messenger service branch. That time, which was slightly across from the San Roque slums, was somewhat deserted, because their entire business shop there at that time.

Outlook

Rigoberto Tiglao

Then—now the most powerful and richest legal hero in the country—is because chief justice.

Tongue, who was with the political opposition during President Aquino's term, has publicly said that Belmonte told the congressmen in that has really called meeting that Corona must be impeached "to be a protégé of GMA" (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo)." As if listening to school children, Belmonte declared that no questions will be entertained, that the impeachment complaint is still being written, and that they should just line up to sign without attending to their agreement to the move.

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Young Blood

Jonas Pluta

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below.—Ed.

Survivors' emotional well-being key to Japan's recovery

Commentary

Ian under Kanoe

EXTRE last one year, the Japanese escaped notice of Japan's northeastern region has undergone a drastic story before says in history for short scale and speed. From Miyazaki to Hiroshima, this happened to Kanagawa, this Sendai-type has been drastically altered or Japan proves to still the world's resilient disaster recovery.

There after some affected by the tsunami has been rated. Homes, schools and busy markets have all disappeared. Almost everything that was in the path of the tsunami is gone. Many people who were to survive marked with towering stockpiles of scrapped cars, recovered metal and millions of tons of ruined debris. Some school industrial jobs will take longer to dismantle. The great but mass of Japan's economic power stood the giant onslaughter, unmolested by the brute force of nature. Japan is not now the shambles most tsunamis in if they were made of paper.

Like their nation, the tsunami survivors have risen to put up a brave front to their luminous loss and suffering, but the world only had to the news of March 11, 2011, to realize that the survivors were not the only ones to appear to recover some pretty relief. There was shock and great tragedy, but no public display of emotion.

One was him, the tsunami survivors are still mourning their dead. Many are still waiting to hear about their missing relatives. Over 340,000 people are still in temporary shelters. Some residents cannot what they will return to their homes. Despite all this, the survivors rarely speak out and least of all complain about their circumstances. For them, to be seen needing help is a sign of self-support and needing help is almost forcing those who need it most.

The survivors' stoic reserve has not stopped significant attempts to live up to the values of disaster, the survivors, especially the children, need help. For thousands of them, life has not moved forward since March 11, 2011, as they come to

The presumed world don't to be resilient and the economic confusion of psychosocial care with mental illness in Japan mean that those in real need may never seek help. The staff of Shin Japan had to adapt and evolve ways to reach their team, very private people. Yet parties were used to no-cause to bring people together so they could talk about their feelings. Psychosocial care had to be reformed which child support.

Emotional support or psychosocial care is often neglected by disaster responses, as it is among the most basic needs of disaster survivors. It is vital for affected people to be able to relate to and deal with their circumstances in simple things such as group activities, games, or getting people to talk to each other enables vulnerable me to be healing process. But still, supporting survivors' mental disorders—the pervasive high-risk people from not receiving any stigma where they require specialized mental health care involving psychiatric and clinical psychologists.

But the events of March 11, 2011, have required a worrying neglect of mental well-being in Japan. This is sentiment echoed by medical health experts who fear that things could get worse.

The pressure is intense on Japan and its economic services to resume business. In the world's third largest economy, time for rapid rebuilding and recovery is short and lost sight of the survivors' emotional well-being.

It is a challenge and a humanitarian need that must be met. For Japan's recovery to be successful, it must be matched second.

Ian Under Kanoe is an award-winning development journalist and global press officer for Plan International, a child rights and community development organization. He is also a Chevening human rights scholar.

Bosses getting impatient with impeachment court

ME, THE people, in whom "sovereignty resides," and from whom "government authority emanates," am getting impatient. For an institution bedeviling, hyperbolizing, grandstanding, and the fascist seemingly hammer "manifestos now" in the impeachment trial, and let us, the real bosses of the senators, see the "whole" truth promptly so that our time-matrimony will not be wasted.

We are saddening this circle impeachment scene...the senator-judges, and most pointedly to the presiding officer, to whom majority of the senators defer. Time over time never makes us wait since, except now! Don't make us wait since, except now! You have the power to "expedite the proceedings."

Because of his actions, one of the project official servants to "suspected" Ombudsman Gutierrez "manifestoized" notwithstanding of harming our trust [illegible]

NEW INTERCHANGE Ready, go-se, go! Go-karts zoomed in the BGC-C5 interchange. C5 North Bank, a public-private partnership project, was opened to motorists recently. The half-mile flyover provides the shortest, most direct access from Bonifacio Global City (BGC) to the northbound lane of C5. The opening ceremonies were led by (from left) Taguig City Councilor Ag Barcelona, Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) president and CEO Arnel Paciano Casanova, Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Francis Tolentino, BCDA Chair Felicito Payumo, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. president Antonino Aquino and PNDC director Edgardo Cruz. STORY ON PAGE A2 | PHOTO BY ALVIN KASIBANG

Rats make good decisions, say US researchers

From page A1

"statistically optimal" course—in other words, the best way possible.

"Statistically optimal combines Bayes's mathematical rule [about] how well one can make decisions, but many have been skeptical about this behavior occurring in other species," said Anne Churchland, a neuroscientist who led the study appearing in the March 14 issue of the Journal of Neuroscience.

"Our work is the first demonstration of this occurrence in rodents."

Autism study

The findings suggest that the same evolutionary process may be at play in rats and humans that allows for sophisticated decision-making, and could offer a platform for study of autism spectrum disorders, the study said.

People with autism are often unable to choose which sensory stimuli to pay attention to and which to ignore, making everyday tasks difficult like picking out the grocery store's potentially most reliable cashier.

"We can use our rat model to 'look under the hood' to understand how the brain is combining multisensory information and how it better or worse in people with these disorders," Churchland said.

Next, Churchland and her colleagues plan to build on their research by studying the interaction of sensory experiences and memories.

"Idea that outlines a good animal model in which to investigate these questions, like world—or the brain—is not quite," she said. AFP

Ex-Governor Reyes: Real masterminds laughing their heads off

From page A1

finding and recommended the filing of a murder complaint against Reyes; his brother, Mayor Mario Reyes Jr. of Cocos, Palawan; former Palawan Administrator Romeo Sotelo; Arturo Reyes Garcia and Valentin Jacela.

They found "probable cause" in, including non-the former governor in the complaint, using the exchange of text messages purportedly between him and Bodiz, killed Ace redemption girl.

Bilend, formerly a close an security guard of Reyes, claimed that he witnessed the services of the gunmen and his associates for P150,000, and that the Reyes brothers hired the operation to kill Ortega.

Ortega was shot and killed while shopping in a mall clothing store in Puerto Princesa City on Jan. 26, 2011. He had bullet wounds to the head and body.

Charged with the murder earlier by the DOJ were Eldrid, Armando B. Abot, Dennis C. Acuna and Ronald L. Rosales.

Media pressure!

"I hope this is now a persevering of justice resulting from media pressure because of unsolved media killings in the country, that this is not a dishonorment of justice in the altar of public opinion," Bonoan said.

He said the reversal of a past DOJ decision "has create confusion in the minds of the public and perhaps question the integrity of the justice department to its ability to render firm and steadfast decisions."

In a press conference held in Manila, Ortega's daughter, Michaella and Rocket, said the family was preparing for the court battle to get justice for their father.

"My family would like to thank the DOJ for allowing the reinvestigation and evaluating my father's case based on its merits. Now we can move on to the next phase, which, sexually speaking, is the longest and hardest battle," Michaella said.

Describing the decision to reinstate the murder complaint against Reyes as "most dishonorming," his lawyer, Ferdinand Topacio, said the prosecutors were "succumbing to political pressure and trial by publicity."

Topacio said "no new evidence was presented to reinstate the claim of the lone witness [Edrid] against Governor Reyes."

'Clear case of persecution'

"This is truly a clear case of prosecution, and an unhappy demonstration of unyielding revolt and justice on the altar of public opinion and political influence," Topacio said.

The prosecution saw Ortega's retaliation on six against Reyes to involve to have the broadcaster "silenced."

But Reyes' camp pointed out that Ortega was an active critic and ally of the former governor but of other personalities in Palawan.

The Ortega family's lawyers, Alex Avisado, said he would file a motion for partial reconsideration of the dismissal of alleged conspirators in the murder, former Marinduque Gov. Boing Carrion, would be included.

The family also plans to request the DOJ and the court to issue watch list and hold departure orders against Reyes and the seven set of suspects, Avisado said. Aurora Anog

I'M SCARED.

I WORRY ABOUT MY HEALTH.

WHAT IF I GET SICK?

NO ONE WILL TAKE CARE OF ME.

WAKE UP TO THE LIGHT TO SEE WHAT PHILHEALTH HAS DONE FOR YOU FOR 25 YEARS.

PHILHEALTH

25 YEARS

BSP asks 3 CA justices to inhibit from Banco Filipino case

By Jerome Aning

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the Monetary Board (MB) have asked three Court of Appeals (CA) justices to inhibit themselves from the Banco Filipino savings and thrift bank case.

The two state agencies questioned the impartiality of Justices Noel Tijam, Normandie Pizarro and Agnes Reyes-Carpio of the CA former Special 14th Division.

Special raffle

The BSP and MB, who are respondents in the Banco Filipino case, questioned the division's Jan. 27 decision which declared illegal the government's takeover of Banco Filipino after being insolvent.

The court ordered the central bank to restore P25 billion in dismantled assistance to the bank.

"[We] wanted to reiterate some doubts over whether [we] can still be assured of a neutral and impartial tribunal," the BSP and MB said in their motion for inhibition.

According to the respondents, two of the division's original members, Justices Marlene Gonzales-Sison and Mariflor Punzalan-Castillo, who had acted on the BSP and MB as realty pleadings, inhibited themselves, citing "personal reasons," a week before the decision came out.

Contradicts previous ruling

The BSP and MB noted that it took a few days for Pizarro and Velasco to be chosen to replace Sison and Castillo—in a special raffle. The division "would only have at most four working days, including the day of promulgation, to decide the case, they said.

The manner in which the assailed decision was penned at and promulgated... from the supposing inhibitions of its previous members for personal reasons, to the designation of special members of the division, to the appreciation of the case evidence adduced by the parties herein—has led respondents BSP-MB to doubt the honorable justices' ability to continue hearing the instant case free from bias, prejudice and partiality," the respondents said.

The BSP and MB wanted Reyes-Carpio, who wrote the decision, to inhibit from the case due to the reasons that she contradicted her previous decision which favored the government, ruling that Banco Filipino was guilty of bonus shopping.

"In the present case, the state evidence which is the same one designated by Justice Reyes-Carpio, as insufficient to overthrow the presumption that the official duty has been regularly performed, were suddenly swept aside and used to set aside the said presumption. It is elementary that there must be clear and convincing contradictory evidence for the honorable court to disregard the presumption of regularity," the petitioners said.

'Indecent haste'

As for Pizarro and Velasco, the BSP and MB said the two justices showed "indecent haste" in rendering the case.

Assuming that the foregoing can be done in less than a day, effort of two (possibly three) more hand, they said the Special Division dedicated its entire time and effort in the first few days in coming out with the assailed decision, ignoring all others or worse, disdained the case was evaded and the honorable court was less than judicious and diligent in its resolution," the petitioners said.

"In other case, the law do not require confidence to the highest degree in rendering the assailed decision, for which the affiliation is sought," they added.

The BSP placed Banco Filipino under receivership and stopped the bank from continuing its operations, claiming it was insolvent and had engaged in "unsound banking practices."

6.8-quake jars Japan, spawns small tsunami

TOKYO—A small tsunami swept Japan's northeastern coastline on Wednesday, officials said, after a strong earthquake rocked the region a year on from the country's worst postwar natural disaster.

The 20-centimeter wave and 6.8-magnitude quake, which struck around 2:45 (classified) off Japan's northern island of Hokkaido, prompted local authorities to issue an evacuation warning for coastal residents before it hit land. No damage or injury was reported.

Several metre-tsunami-evacuation orders or advisories in evidence across the coast.

A swelling of 20 cm was observed in the port of Hachinohe in Aomori, northern Japan, about one hour after the quake. Smaller changes were also reported in several locations on Hokkaido island.

The Japan Meteorological Agency also confirmed that an earlier 1.0-cm wave hit land.

No Pacific-wide threat

The waves hit two locations in Aomori prefecture, which was one of the areas in Japan's northeast devastated by last year's disaster.

The agency had initially said a tsunami could reach Japan's coast, but US monitors said there was no Pacific-wide tsunami threat.

Wednesday's quake was centered about 220 km south of Iwaki, Japan, on Honshu's island, but was not felt in Tokyo.

The quake struck at a relatively shallow 10 km below the seabed at 0450 p.m. local time, 24 aftershock of magnitude 5.9 struck Iwaki about two hours later.

The tsunami warning—which was lifted about two hours later—came after a 9.0-magnitude earthquake triggered a monstrous wall of water on March 11 last year that killed more than 19,000 people and crippled Japan's Fukushima nuclear plant.

The tsunami swamped cooling systems at the Fukushima site and sent three reactors into meltdown, spewing radiation into the environment and sparking the world's worst atomic accident in a generation.

There were no immediate reports of damage at nuclear facilities in the area affected by Wednesday's quake.

Unaffected

A spokesperson for Tohoku Electric Power, which operates two nuclear power plants in the country's northeast, said the facilities were unaffected.

"There was no damage to our nuclear power facilities following the earthquake," he said.

"We have not monitored any change in radiation levels around the facilities following the quake."

The meteorological agency also warned the tsunami could reach the Izu-Bonin islands, off Hokkaido, which Russia has controlled since Japan's surrender at the end of World War II.

The town of Otsuchi in Iwate prefecture, where more than 800 died in last year's tsunami, issued an evacuation order to all households along the coast as a precaution. No damage or injury was reported from the quake in the area.

Iwate was heavily damaged by last year's earthquake and tsunami. Thousands of aftershocks have shaken the region since then, nearly all of them of minor or moderate strength.

On Sunday, Japan will observe a commemorative last year's tragedy, with tearful families gathering in towns and villages across the country's northeast to remember those they lost when the towering waves smashed ashore.

Tens of thousands were forced to evacuate a 20-km exclusion zone immediately around the Fukushima plant, while many families with small children moved away from the prefecture completely.

Nuclear power

On Sunday's anniversary, thousands protested against nuclear power in demonstrations across the world.

Japan has temporarily shut most of its 54 commercial nuclear reactors, but plans to reopen the plants has run off a highly charged debate in a country prone to earthquakes.

On Monday, a group of Japanese citizens filed a lawsuit to prevent the restart of a nuclear power plant, warning that there was little proof the reactors were quake-resistant.

The lawsuit also lamented Japan's already struggling economy, which was dealt a further blow by the evacuation of residents from dozens of towns and villages around the Fukushima plant.

Reports from AFP and AP

P2.1M a year for CJ decent, not excessive, says CSC chief

By Leila B. Salaverria

WHEN you get down to it, P22 million in 10 years is relatively small change, according to Civil Service Commissioner (CSC) Chua Francisco Duque.

Chua's total compensation amounts to an average of P2.1 million per year, or P175,000 a month, which Duque described as "decent," considering Chief Justice Renato Corona is the highest-paid government official.

As to whether or not the amount—revealed by a Supreme Court official during Tuesday's impeachment trial of Corona—is "too much," Duque said: "That's what you call the tyranny of numbers. You do your math."

Duque told the Inquirer in a phone interview that the figure wasn't that staggering, especially compared to the allowances that officials in other government offices and corporations used to receive, such as the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

The Commission on Audit earlier reported that the members of the GSIS board of trustees received P11 million each in 2009.

He pointed out that P175,000 per month, divided by 22 days of work, is about P7,900 per day. "That is not really so big as what you want to think it is," he said.

Fringe benefits

Among the allowances a Chief Justice receives are representation and transportation allowances and extraordinary and miscellaneous expenses, Duque said.

The Chief Justice also receives compensation as allowances for serving in electoral tribunals and the Judicial and Bar Council.

She has other fringe benefits and these are taxable benefits," Duque said. He also said the judiciary had its own compensation structure.

As of 2011, a salary grade 32 official earns as much as P100,000 per month. The salaries under the different grades increase periodically.

NEVER
DON'T
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SOME W
SEE LIFE IN
A NEW LIGHT

"SIN TAX"

A Crippling Blow to the Beer Industry: What's at Stake

The proposed House Bill 5727 seeks to unify and increase the excise tax rate for beer.

On the first year of implementation, all beer products will be levied an excise tax of P25.00 per liter.

For economy brands that would be tantamount to a 140% increase in excise tax.

In other words, it's consumers who can only afford the lower-priced beers that shall bear the burden of additional taxes.

Given that low-priced and economy brands make up 74% of all beer sold in the Philippines, we're looking at a steep drop in beer industry volumes.

Conservative figures have beer volumes declining by as much as 50%—a staggering decline.

The change in the status quo will only result in lost jobs and income for those who need it most.

As many as 8,000 workers directly associated with the production and selling of beer, and tens of thousands more involved in the distribution of beer products stand to lose their jobs.

Lower beer sales will threaten the livelihood of more than 500,000 sari-sari stores nationwide.

HB 5727 will place beer products out of reach of our consumers who are mostly in the lower-income bracket.

It doesn't have to be this way.

We support a tax law which is multi-tiered and provides for moderate increases, protects the rights of low-income consumers and promotes the healthy growth of an industry which has always been a committed partner to economic development.

ASIA BREWERY
INCORPORATED

SAN MIGUEL
BREWERY INC.

TO THE HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

We, the members of the Distilled Spirits Association of the Philippines, together with all of our direct employees totaling over a hundred thousand, submit to your mandated function to impose taxes on our industry.

But this we do with great apprehension because the current proposal under House Bill No. 5727, which is authored by Cavite Rep. Joseph Abaya and treated by some members of the ruling party as being endorsed by the President, will cause the death of our industry, our only source of livelihood, as well as of more than 5,000,000 of our countrymen who produce our raw materials and render allied services for our industry. The viability of a distillery employing a million not-so-rich stones nationwide, that derive 20 percent of their income from our distilled spirits products, would also be affected.

While we understand that our economy needs additional revenues from taxes, these revenues should not be raised through a measure that goes against the interests of the poor and its stakeholders, a measure that increases social and economic inequalities rather than reduces it, a measure that is regressive rather than progressive contrary to the constitutional mandate for Congress to evolve a progressive system of taxation.

HB No. 5727 intends to penalize us with **more than 1,000% increase** in tax on the third year with an excise tax of P150 per proof liter or more than 10 times the current P14.68/proof liter, while it rewards high priced brands falling under Section 141(b) of the National Internal Revenue Code, with a **1,500% percent decrease** in tax on the first year from P634.90/proof liter to P42/proof liter for those under the premium classification. By the third year, luxurious brands with an average net retail price of P95/750 ml bottle and high-priced brands with average net retail prices of P45/.750 ml bottle for standard; P95/750 ml bottle for de luxe and P2,850/750 ml bottle for premium classification will all pay the same tax of P150/proof liter.

Our industry generates sales of around P42 billion yearly and contributes about P6.5 billion in excise taxes per year. With the proposed bill, the Department of Finance claims that it would be able to raise excise taxes of P213 billion over a period of five years. This is roughly the same amount of gross sales that the industry would generate for the same period. One has to ask the question, how could the industry pay excise taxes equivalent to its total gross revenues?

DOF projects to collect from distilled spirits industry a cumulative total of P213.13 billion to excise tax revenues for the next five years, even more than cigarettes and fermented liquors and projected at an exponential increase every year which is not realistic.

DOF Reform Proposal
Estimated Incremental Revenues (In P Billion)

Year	Cigarettes	Distilled Spirits	Fermented Liquor	Total
Year1	30.1	11.2	19.4	60.7
Year2	36.1	26.5	21.7	84.5
Year3	41.3	53.0	24.1	118.4
Year4	48.4	58.4	26.7	129.5
Year5	40.3	64.2	29.6	139.3
Total	196.4	213.3	121.5	531.2

With the industry's annual gross revenues of P42 B, it is impossible to collect P213 B in five years. That would be equal to the industry's cumulative 5-year sales revenue at current prices.

The distilled spirits industry is highly sensitive to inflation and dependent on the very low purchasing power of Filipino consumers. Industry data below show that more than 90 percent of the total industry volume is being consumed by consumers belonging to the D and E socio-economic classes. In light of this data, we ask: **How could the typical Filipino consumer afford a tax of P150 per proof liter that would raise the price of a local distilled spirit almost three times from current prices from P64 pesos to P150 per 750 ml bottle, when his total expendable income for the product is only about P60 per week?** The proposed bill is regressive and anti-poor. **The proposed bill seeks to raise the incremental revenues by taxing not the consumers who could afford the additional tax, but by taxing those who could not.**

Liquor Industry Data
Eco class D & E consume 91.3% of industry volume

Share by Economic Class	2007	2008	2009
AB	1.7	1.7	1.4
C	6.9	6.6	5.9
D	9.1	7.9	8.2
E (Lowest class)	43.4	42.8	41.5
D+E (Extremely low class)	52.5	50.7	49.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

If the bill seeks to generate revenues, we have questions on why it is designed this way. **Does the bill intend to induce consumption, despite the aimed exemplary tax increase of 1000% on distilled spirits intended for the mass market, so it can raise tax revenues? Or does it want to influence the increased consumption of high-priced luxury brands and switch the market preference so them as such products would enjoy a huge permanent tax cut so government can eventually realize the increase in tax revenues from our industry? But why reduce the tax on high-priced distilled spirits and why increase the tax on the economy distilled spirits to the point that the industry volumes would shrink by two thirds?**

The fermented and distilled beverage tradition was well-established in our islands as part of culture well before the European contact, before Spaniards set foot upon our soil. The earliest Spanish writers already spoke of established native beverages, whether simply fermented or distilled, such as *tuba* (from sap of coconut or nipa palm), *tandoang* (distilled from coconut palm), *tapey* (rice wine) and *bute* (sugar cane wine). Our more than five century industry now faces an uncertain future. We are besieged by fear that with a single stroke of legislation, we will cease to exist as part of an age-old human culture raised out of existence.

Indeed, the power to tax is the prerogative of the legislature. We, however, all should pay us to keep in mind that **legitimate enterprises enjoy the constitutional protection not to be taxed out of existence. Incurring losses because of a tax imposition may be an acceptable consequence but killing the business of an entity is another matter and should not be allowed. It is counter-productive and ultimately subversive of the nation's thrust towards a better economy which will ultimately benefit the majority of our people.'**

It is upon your hands now, honorable members of the House of Representatives, the duly elected delegates of the voices of our people. We beseech your collective wisdom on the matter at hand so we may become a responsible and cooperative society, working together towards a beautiful and prosperous nation for our people.

We are sure nobody wants to have blood on their hands....

Very respectfully, we submit to your prudence.

DISTILLED SPIRITS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

GINEBRA SAN MIGUEL INC. • EMPERADOR DISTILLERS INC. • TANDUAY DISTILLERS INC. • DESTILERIA LIMTUACO & CO. INC.
DISTILLERIA BAGO INC. • ASIAN ALCOHOL CORPORATION • ABSOLUTE CHEMICALS INC. • CONSOLIDATED DISTILLERS INC.
CENTRAL AZUCARERA DE TARLAC • FAR EAST ALCOHOLS OF THE PHILIPPINES

GLASS MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES INC.

SAN MIGUEL YAMAMURA • ASIA BREWERY PADRIGING • ANGLO WATSONS GLASS INC. • ANCOR GLASS INC. • ASIAN GLASS CORPORATION • LUCKY TABLEWARE - CEBU

Pilipino Samahang Manggagawa • Association of Democratic Labor Organizations (ADLO) • Lakas Paglaktasa ng mga Manggagawa sa Lintuan (LAPAWALIS)
Labor Management Council, GSMI Cabuyao Plant • Labor Management Council, GSMI Bgo. Barbara Plant • Free Workers Association (TDI Daily Paid Employees Union, GSMI Mandaue Plant • Tanduay Distillers Labor Union (TDLU) • Samahang Nagkakaisang Manggagawa ng Tanduay (Cabuyao) • Labor Union of Tanduay Employees (Elected)
Congress of Independent Organization ALU (CIO-ALU), Distilleria Bago Inc. • Global Bella Multipurpose Cooperative • Consolidated Distillers Employees Union (CDEU)
Federation of Unions of Rizal (FUR) • La Tondeña Distillers Inc. Workers Union, Bgo. Barbara Plant Monthly Paid Independent Union

OPPOSE DOF-BACKED HOUSE BILL 5727!

HOUSE BILL 5727 is ANTI-LOCAL INDUSTRY

Full-page ads have appeared in major newspapers attacking the current four-tiered excise tax system under Republic Act 9334.

These ads call for the passage of HB 5727 prescribing a single rate on all brands to "level the playing field."

Will adopting one rate for all cigarette brands level the playing field?

Consider this.

This will happen if HB 5727 is adopted:

- Tax rate on imported premium brands will increase by only **6%**
- Tax rate on low-priced local brands will increase by more than **1,000%**

A 1000% increase is excessive and unprecedented; no other country in the world has increased taxes that much.

This will be the likely impact of HB 5727:

- Legal cigarettes will become unaffordable for many Filipinos.
- Cigarette consumption will however not be greatly reduced because consumers will switch to cheaper, non-regulated black-market cigarettes thus undermining the public health objective of the tax reform.
- The Government's revenue objective will be undermined by smuggled and fake cigarettes which do not pay taxes.
- Tobacco growers and small local manufacturers which produce only low- and mid-priced brands will be threatened in their existence.
- The livelihood of the **2.9 million** Filipinos who depend on the tobacco industry will be impacted.

We support the passage of a tax law which provides for the current multi-tiered structure as well as REGULAR AND MODERATE TAX INCREASES.

By Philippine Tobacco Institute:

Associated Anglo-American Corporation
Fortune Tobacco Corporation
JT International (Philippines) Inc.
La Suerte Cigar and Cigarette Manufacturing Inc.
Mighty Corporation
Philip Morris Philippines Manufacturing Inc.
PMFTC Inc.

WE APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT THE LOCAL TOBACCO INDUSTRY.

PAID ADVT

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Across the NATION

Hike in toll on Kennon Road looms

By Paolo G. Montecillo

AN INCREASE in toll on Kennon Road looms as the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) prepares to take over the road until sell it to the private sector.

"If you look at Kennon Road, it takes a lot of money to maintain that," said Arnel Casanova, the BCDA president.

"That's year-round because of landslides. We need money for that," Casanova said.

He said the plan to hand over maintenance and supervision of Kennon Road to the private sector was proposed by Baguio Rep. Bernardo Vergara and supported by Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson.

Bernardo said Casanova would be consented to the proposed Tarlac-Pangasinan-La Union Expressway (TPLEX).

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) currently collects P15 per vehicle passing through Kennon.

Like the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx), BCDA designated the TPLEx to link the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone here and the Poro Point Special Economic Zone in San Fernando City, La Union, which the agency administers, said Casanova.

"(TPLEx) will be connecting two economic the same way we did for Clark Freeport and Subic Bay Freeport) with the construction of SCTEx," said BCDA chair Rhoda Peñarco in a statement.

Baguio Rep. Bernard Gonzales, chair of the House committee on public works and highways, said he and Vergara endorsed the signing road reconstruction project to BCDA last year.

Built in 1905, the 34-kilometer Kennon Road has been beset each year by rock slides, particularly during the rainy season, which cost the DPWH millions of pesos for repairs and maintenance, government records showed.

Historical accounts describe the construction of Kennon Road, then known as Benguet Road, as the most expensive undertaking by the American colonial government, in the same period when it designed and built Baguio City.

Kennon Road was heavily damaged by the July 1990 earthquake and was closed to traffic for major repairs. When it reopened, the DPWH only allowed light vehicles to pass through the road.

Buses and trucks are barred from using the road, which is the shortest route to the city.

Vergara, the vice chair of the House committee on public works and highways, said he proposed that government build a series of bridges and viaducts on Kennon Road's landslide-prone areas.

He said new technology can afford the construction of bridges to skim away from unstable areas of the road that are prone to erosion.

"This would be more environment-friendly because we will no longer need to dig new tunnels," Vergara said.

But Vergara expressed reservations about Casanova's plan to turn Kennon Road into a privately run toll road.

Vergara said privatizing the road and allowing the motorists to collect toll was not what the city government intended. "It may even be illegal," he said. *With Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

COMMON SIGHT
A man brings himself perilously close to a fire raging in Barangay Suba in Cebu City to try to save his family's belongings before the fire reaches his home. The March 4 fire destroyed 95 houses and was followed by several more fires.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ SORSOGON

'Tootsie' Jamoralin, 66

JORGER Inquirer correspondent Reynaldo "Tootsie" Jamoralin died on March 12 at the age of 66, four years after he was paralyzed by a stroke.

An environment correspondent, Jamoralin was credited with exposing the illegal slaughter of whale sharks, locally known as "butanding," in Bicol that paved the way for whale shark protection.

In March 1988, Jamoralin won the first story of the month of the Louis H. Frieht Journalism Award for his article "Gentle whale sharks in Bicol threatened" in the issues.

He founded and led the Sorsogon Arts Council (SAC) and was a member of the Sorsogon Heritage Society chaired by business leader Eugenia Duran Apostol.

Jamoralin is survived by wife Cita, sisters Marcia and Miller, daughter Sayre, stepdaughter Ian and grandson CJ. His body lies at the family residence on Memorial corner Real Streets in Sorsogon City.

He will be buried on Saturday, March 17, at the Sorsogon Memorial Gardens in Sorsogon City after Mass at the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral. *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

■ DAVAO CITY

70th Save More store

THE COUNTRY'S 70th Save More store will open today in Barangay Bangkal here, according to a top Save More official in the city.

Allan Flores, Save More Davao operations manager, said the SM Group spent about P80 million to build the new 2,500-square meter Save More store.

SM built the store in front of Waters, which shut down last year. Flores said there are 28 more Save More stores to be opened this year under SM's plan to build 100 Save More stores in the country.

"Save More is SM's way of bringing its stores closer to the consumers," he said. *Jody Delmo, Inquirer Mindanao*

■ TAGUM CITY

Fire hits commercial area

FIVE separate commercial area here, destroying at least P10 million worth of pieces of property. No one was injured, authorities said.

Shanties, boarding houses and lumberyards were destroyed or suffered damages during the fire, according to Senior Insp. Sotero Cayo, spokesperson of the Southern Mindanao police.

The fire lasted for more than an hour. *Freedom L. Cain, Inquirer Mindanao*

■ FORT MAGSAYSAY

Army, Church execs sign MOU

THE PHILIPPINE Army has partnered with the Catholic Church for counterinsurgency operations in Central Luzon.

Brig. Gen. Allan Luga, head of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, said the partnership was formalized through a memorandum of understanding that created the Church-Military Advisory Group (CMAG) at the Northern Luzon Command headquarters in Tarlac City last week.

Tarlac Bishop Florentino Cinense and Bishop Leopoldo Tumulak signed the document for the Church. Luga and other top military officials signed for the Army. *Armand Galang, Inquirer Central Luzon*

■ CEBU CITY

Live wire kills 9-year-old boy

A 9-YEAR-OLD boy died from electric shock while his 42-year-old mother suffered burns on Tuesday in Cebu Mandaue, Sandra del Rio, the police said on Wednesday.

Senior Supt. Ronaldo Llanera said Almarvin Sali was killed when he accidentally stepped on a power line. His mother Mercy tried to pull him away but ended up with burned hands, Llanera said.

Police could not say why the live wire was lying on the ground. *Orlando B. Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao*

■ EVENTS

Kapuso Village to rise in Iligan

THE CHARITY arm of one of the country's biggest broadcast networks has ventured into a housing project for victims of the Dec. 17 disaster that struck Iligan City at the height of Tropical Storm "Sendong."

But dubbed the ISMA Kapuso Foundation said it and the local government of Iligan held groundbreaking rites for the Kapuso Village in the town of Maranding for residents of Iligan who lost homes during the disaster.

The project will rise on 4.3-hectare lot from the local government. The foundation said it would build at least 250 houses on the lot.

The ceremony was attended by Md C. Tuangco, ISMA Kapuso foundation executive vice president; Iligan City Mayor Lawrence Cruz and several other officials of housing agencies and the local government.

The foundation, according to its statement, will also build shelter facility in Sitio Saluan, a predominantly Muslim community and among the hardest hit by the disaster in Iligan.

DOLE affirms report on child labor in Bukidnon

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in Northern Mindanao supported a report that child labor prevails in sugarcane plantations in Bukidnon.

The report was released by Xavier University, which said minors are being hired as workers in sugarcane plantations in the province. The university conducted a survey of the labor situation in these areas.

Under the law, minors are prohibited from employment in industries where their safety couldn't be guaranteed, including agricultural plantations.

If minors are to be employed, according to labor officials, they should be given jobs "that would not endanger their lives" and they should be under the supervision of parents, guardians. Those hiring minors should first seek permission from the labor department.

Johnson Cuesta, the labor director for Northern Mindanao, said Quezon town in Bukidnon is among the areas where minors are being employed in sugarcane plantations. Most of the children working in the plantations come from poor families, Cuesta said.

"Some employers are exploiting the situation in the region to destroy in Bukidnon charcoal," Cuesta said.

The labor department, he said, has stepped up its anti-child labor campaign, particularly in Bukidnon, as a result of the finding.

He said labor department representatives have been inspecting establishments to check for compliance with labor laws, including those which have the hiring of minors.

Some workers interviewed by Inquirer said children can bring blood because they won't complain even if the pay is low.

Firms that employ children hide the minors during inspections, said the workers, who requested anonymity for fear of reprisal from their employers.

Only adult workers are presented to officials during the inspections, the workers said.

Cuesta said the labor department needs the help of the media to check on and put a stop to the hiring of child workers.

Until workers step forward to submit sworn complaints against child labor, all the labor department could do is accept the pledge of businessmen not to hire children on its face value, according to Cuesta. *With Fel, Inquirer Mindanao*

We're not pollution source in Taal Lake, says fish pen group

By Marlon Ciriaco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

HOA PEN operators in Taal Lake expressed fears of indiscriminate banning of their operations even as officials of Batangas cited reports that solid wastes from businesses thriving around the lake, including piggeries, were among the major causes of pollution in the lake.

Mario Bautista, a member of the board of trustees and spokesperson of Taal Lake Aquaculture Alliance Inc. (TLAAI), said his group was concerned over statements made by government officials that should another fishkill occur, fish cage operations in the entire lake would be stopped for at least five years under a 2000 act of rules.

Lemery mayor, the Batangas provincial area superintendent, said the moratorium would be enforced if a fishkill occurs this year.

Guidelines under the Taal Volcano protected landscape management plan of 2009 provides that the moratorium would be enforced in a municipality if a fishkill threatened 20 percent of the town's fish cage population.

Bautista, however, said the guidelines were not clear which could lead to an indiscriminate banning of fish cages in Taal Lake.

TLAAI is a group of 1,200 fish cage operators and caretakers from Talisay, Laurel, Agoncillo, San Nicolas, Cuenca and Alitagtag na Kabay towns.

In an open letter early this month, the group said "a moratorium is not the solution, as this only means avoiding the real problem."

"The right solution is to strengthen a sustainable aquaculture project for Taal Lake," the group's open letter said.

The fish cage operators also asked government to investigate other possible sources of lake pollutants than the 37 fish cages carry to the lake.

"When a fishkill occurs, they immediately blame the fish cages because we are the easy they are on the lake," said Bautista, whose group has no supervise on investigating pollution and its sources.

"How about pollutants and fertilizers carried from golf courses and upland areas like Tagaytay into the lake?" Bautista said.

In May 2011, a massive fishkill hit the lake, leading to losses of more than 2,000 tons of fish and causing damage worth P1.68.3 million, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Bautista, during the recent Taal Lake Fishery Stakeholders' Forum in Batangas City, said the guidelines set by Task Force Taal in 2009 seek to regulate waste discharges from backyard and commercial piggeries and other land activities around the lake.

The task force, chaired by Batangas Provincial Administrator Victor Reyes, identified solid wastes from towns and villages that are discharged into the river as a major cause of pollution to the lake.

A study by the University of the Philippines in Los Baños also found that many backyard and commercial farms deposit their wastes into land canals and rivers and the lake that they feed.

SOME of the 1,200 fish cage operators and workers depending on Taal Lake for their livelihood gather for a rally during the Taal Lake Fishery Stakeholders' Forum in Batangas City recently.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Village won't forget war guerrillas

By Jun Escalante jr.
Correspondent, Camarines Sur

BEFORE the crack of dawn on March 15, 1942, 16-year-old Antonio B Estrada and other residents of Barangay San Nicolas in Canaman, Camarines Sur, found themselves ducking from bullets after Japanese soldiers unexpectedly attacked the community while celebrating a wedding.

Estrada, now 86, recalled that he first heard somebody shouting that the Japanese soldiers were coming. A flare was lit, making the nocturnes night dark flashes of light for minutes, followed by bursts of fire from a machine gun, he said.

ANTONIO B Estrada, a veteran of Tangway Nasa Guerrilla Unit

The attack on the day formerly Barangdon and Bicolano Obrero's many was feared until the wee hours. It was to be the start of a series of harassment on the town's people.

A week ago, the Tangway Nasa Guerrilla Unit (TNGU) was formally organized as the biggest and most influential armed resistance to the Japanese occupation in Camarines Sur.

70th anniversary

"It culminated with the reunion of heroes folks from San Nicolas to the town center of Canaman," Estrada said on the occasion of the 70th founding day of the TNGU.

He recognized how men, women, children and elderly people rushed to the town in single file, carrying with them the personal belongings they had gathered after the Japanese razed all the houses in San Nicolas.

"We stayed in the school and houses of relatives," Estrada recounted.

Two of the three founders of the TNGU, Eliut Madrid and Juan Miranda, were living in San Nicolas, which was considered perhaps fiercely populated to most guerrillaforces. As such, the Japanese soldiers and the group of the pro-Japanese Filipino informer kept coming back to the village several times to look for Miranda, the guerrilla leader.

Major's role

Estrada said Juan S.A. Antonio, the other TNGU founder who hailed from the adjoining town of Libmanan, was coming in and out of San Nicolas in late 1941 before the group was formed in the autumn of 1942. At that time, Major Damaso Baquiran was designated as the operations of the TNGU, acting as machinist with officials of the Japanese forces whenever civilians were in danger.

Jose T Buenaventa A. Estrey, writer and author of the book "In The Crucible Of An Occupation and Tales In Camarines Sur 1942-1945," said the TNGU was organized on the 30th birthday of Miranda in his house in San Nicolas.

"Eventually to lolodano (Miranda), Eliut [Madrid] with his brothers Modesto and Policarpio, Bernardo Martinez, and many elected Miranda. They and three Madrid brothers the idea of armed resistance and the offer of command to his nephew Miranda), who, like him, had been born in San Nicolas," Buenaventa wrote.

He said Miranda agreed to Madrid's proposition and proceeded to appoint the rest to executive officer with the task of taking care of propaganda work.

"So himself, Miranda took for the finance officer, with his personal funds and potentially all money (or whatever could be gathered) from the properties at the service of the resistance group just formed," Buenaventa said.

Civilians' protector

He said the TNGU therefore contacted and directed the mayor to continue his role as town executive so he could safeguard the interests of the guerrillas and the civilian population of Canaman.

Estrada remembered how Baquiran would always find ways to visit the village such as when one Marcelino Gandawad was hit in the thigh by a Japanese machine gun. The injured Baquiran revealed to the town executive where he saw pro-guerrilla attention he said.

Baquiran also initiated the release of the men from San Nicolas who were brought to the Japanese garrison in Libmanan, Estrada said.

Emmanuel Baquiran, the incumbent mayor of Canaman and son of the Japanese-period mayor, recalled that his father, who was acquainted of an informant in the armed resistance, was arrested and brought to the Japanese garrison in Annex de Naga.

He said he learned from the stories of his mother that the villagers first thought that his father was killed. At one instance, his mother, accompanied by an aunt, found his torn polo shirt hanging from a bushed wire in Annex de Naga.

Emmanuel said that since his mother and aunt failed to find his father there, they thought that he had been killed on a nine-day journey by the dead was immediately held at their hospice. "On the fourth day of the novena, my father came home safe and sound, much to its family's surprise," he said.

Baquiran told his family that he was brought to Libmanan and was about to be beheaded when a Japanese officer who knew him stopped the executioner and told his captors, "This is a good civilian."

Estrada said he joined the TNGU sometime in July 1942 and entered joining a military organization even without a gun. "It was not until 1943 (what) I was issued a rifle," he said.

He said the guerrillas would retreat to their mountains camp in Tangway Nasa, a mountain in Libmanan that looks like a large facing of a Bathasan cattle, which could be reached after a nine-hour walk from San Nicolas.

The TNGU was able to free Canaman from the Japanese forces on Aug. 30, 1945, even before the American liberation forces could arrive, Estrada said.

MAYOR Emmanuel Baquiran of Canaman, Camarines Sur, addresses the crowd during the celebration of the 70th founding anniversary of the Tangway Nasa Guerrilla Unit (TNGU), the biggest guerrilla group in Camarines Sur from 1942-1945. On the background is a flame monument dedicated to the founders.

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₱1,899	Manila to Guangzhou or Taipei	₱3,999	Manila to Beijing, Busan, Incheon, Jakarta or Shanghai
₱2,099	Manila to Brunei	₱5,999	Manila to Osaka

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Seats are on round trip basis, inclusive of 1 kg hand carry baggage allowance, non-refundable and with limited availability.
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DID YOU KNOW

PHILIPPINE Airlines had its maiden flight on March 15, 1941 with a twin-engine, five-seater Beech Model 18 aircraft which was flown from the Nielson airfield in Makati to Baguio City. Operated by American pilots Paul Lunn and Leal Scott, the plane carried five passengers. The Nielson Tower now houses the Filipinas Heritage Library. *Zaldy Comida, Inquirer Research*

2 'child rapists' killed in MPD cell

Cops claim 'scuffle' led to suspects' shooting

By Jaymee T. Gamil

A DAY after Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim ordered their confession, two men charged with the rape and murder of a 7-year-old girl were killed in what police described as a "scuffle" Tuesday night at their place of detention.

The Manila Police District said Frederick Soliven, 28, tried to grab the gun of his police escort for inadvertently shot his fellow suspect, Cecilio Bacolo Jr., 39. Another officer responding to the commotion then shot Soliven.

Police earlier said the two men, members of the Bajao-Bajao Spanish jail gang, had admitted to kidnapping, sodomizing and strangling a first grader from the Tatalon district.

The girl was found dead Friday last week, naked from the waist down with a nylon cord around her neck, at a house on Ibo Alvarado Street in Sta. Mesa. She was last seen alive with the two suspects, who allegedly coaxed or lure her from her Barangay Tatalon residence, where Bacolo rented a bed space.

When arrested on Friday, Soliven admitted to hunting after the girl, saying he had asked Bacolo to bring her to him after reading rumors tabloids.

The scuffle took place after Soliven was ordered by eight-shift investigator SPO1 Hazel Dimagiba to empty the container serving as an improvised urinal at the homicide section detention cell inside the MPD headquarters at around 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, according to deputy homicide chief Senior Insp. Israel de la Cruz.

Escorted by Dimagiba on the way to the toilet which was about three meters away from the cell, Soliven then tried to grab the policeman's sidearm. In the struggle that ensued, the gun went off and hit Bacolo in the chest, he la Cruz said.

Another officer on duty, PO2 Rudel Benitez, rushed to the scene and shot Soliven in the face.

When the two men were presented on Monday to Lim, a former Manila police chief who had earned the moniker "Dirty Harry" for his controversial antics (tactics), the mayor asked them point blank: "Mahalaga pa ba buhay sa gitnang edad? Kaya pa ba still alive after what you've done?"

It was the second time this year that a crime suspect was killed while under the MPD's custody after allegedly snatching a police escort's gun.

On the night of Feb. 4, Clinton national Gong Hua Heng, a suspect in the murder of his girlfriend Zhao Chen Lan, allegedly shot himself after taking his escort's pistol while onboard a service vehicle on their way to the prosecutor's office.

Dentist killed in Makati clinic

By Miko Morales

THE POLICE have issued a team to investigate the case of a 50-year-old dentist who was robbed and stabbed to death inside her clinic in Barangay East Rembo, Makati City, at around noon on Tuesday.

The killing of Dr. Nilda Lidasio happened just days after a Manila judge sentenced 40-year-old Eufemia de la Cruz on life imprisonment for the robbery and rape of another female dentist in Paco, Manila, last year.

The case was just one of several filed

(ENTIST, A2)

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Not me, says pa of slain auto dealer on road attack vs carjack suspects

By Nancy C. Carvajal

"I DON'T look at it, so, we also fear for our lives."

This was the reaction of Antonio Evangelista on a stalled attempt on Tuesday to ambush the convoy of the Dominguez brothers, the private suspects in the killing of his son Jeruzon, a car dealer, more than a year ago.

Suspected carjack gang leaders Raymund Dominguez and his brother Roger had just come from a court hearing in Quezon City when two men on a motorcycle fired upon their two-vehicle convoy at around 2 p.m. in Eastwood, Libis, Quezon City. Raymund was grazed by a bullet on his ear but his brother, three other detainees and several jail guards were unhurt.

"I want to state categorically that I had nothing to do with the ambush and we condemn this for our lives, even the witnesses against the suspects," Evangelista told reporters yesterday in a press briefing.

Chief Supt. Isidro de la Vega, Quezon City Police District director, said that the greatest wound sustained by Raymund showed the ambush was not staged.

"The bullet hit his ear area (not) the head. Iyon nhindi ka [brain] dar nagpa," he said, adding, "There was real intent to inflict harm on the target."

Meanwhile, Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo (yesterday) ordered the police to probe the ambush. "Lumw na rason summoned and the suspects are identified and arrested," he told Philippine National Police chief Director General Nicanor Bartolome. PATS ED Bigcas

Twist in Tribune man's case: Cops say he has arrest warrant

By Nitz Calleja

IN A SURPRISING TWIST, The Daily Tribune reporter who was shot and wounded on Sunday night in Pasig City might end up being arrested first ahead of his assailants.

The Eastern Police District, which earlier vowed to serve "all angles" in the probe on the shooting of journalist Fernan Angeles, yesterday released copies of an arrest warrant against one "Fernando Javier Angeles" in connection with a 2011 drug possession case pending before the Pasig Regional Trial Court.

"The police is under the control and the one at the hospital (the Tribune reporter) are one and the same," Supt. Gumaban ilk, public information chief of the Eastern Police District, said in a press briefing.

"The warrant will be served once (Angeles') condition at the hospital becomes stable," Ali said.

Asked why the EPD had dug up the warrant, Ali could not give a straight answer, saying that the investigators looking into Angeles' shooting were not available for the briefing.

Reached later on the phone, the EPD director, Senior Supt. Mario Soriano, said the warrant was being scrutinized as one of the clues that may establish the motive and the suspects behind the shooting.

"It's not job to find as much information as possible about the victim so he adds to his motive and suspects," he said.

Soriano said, "While the warrant was out, we can go deeper about Angeles' involvement in the drug trade," he added.

The warrant was issued by Judge Bet Sapunan-Cortez of the Pasig RTC Branch 264, ilk said investigators came across the document in their background check on the victim.

It turned out, he said, that drugs was activated on Feb. 28, 2011, he alleged possession of an unspecified amount of methamphetamine hydrochloride, also known as "shabu," to a police operative in Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City, where he also resides.

Angeles then posted bail but the court again ordered his arrest five months later for his failure to attend the hearings.

Angeles, 52, who was hired anyway calls or text messages from the location. A radio report quoted her as saying that, as far as she knows, her husband would have only faced filed cases and would have had nothing to do with the drug case cited in the warrant.

Senior Supt. Antonio Germiniano, EPD's deputy director for operations, said he will ask the Pasig City General Hospital to conduct a drug test on the reporter. With a report from Christine Avendaño

Dentist killed in Makati clinic

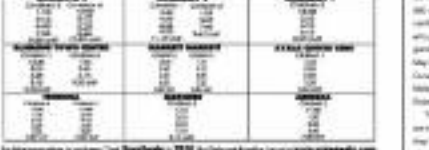
Front page, A-11

against Dr. Ira Cruz who was found to be behind a series of robberies involving women dentists in different areas in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Some of his victims are in either molested or raped.

In a phone interview, Makati police officer in charge, Supt. Jaime Santos, described Catindoy's killing as disturbing, considering that it was committed at daytime.

The victim's coworkers told the police that they left the clinic on 6th floor at around noon. When they got back at around 1 p.m., they found Catindoy lying bloodied on the floor, but valuables missing.

Santos said the victim's attacker appeared to hit her on the head with a bottle and used one of the shards to stab her repeatedly. He added that the victim would undergo an autopsy to determine whether she was raped as there were scratch marks on her body.



OPENS TODAY AT AYALA MALLS CINEMAS

People without integrity

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice has realized its mistake and extricated itself in connection with the killing of radio broadcaster and environmentalist Gerardo "Doc Gerry" Ortega.

The DOJ filed murder charges Tuesday against former Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes, his brother Coron Mayor Mario Reyes Jr., former Palawan administrator Romeo Jer Zaldivar and two others, who were released last year by the department.

Prior to the filing, investigations by the Puerto Princesa City police and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), it was obvious that Reyes is ill acquitted in murdering Ortega.

The movies was also very clear: Gerry Ortega was murdered Reyes in the broadcaster's daily radio program.

The first DOJ panel that conducted the preliminary investigation said it found evidence and testimonies of witnesses "insufficient to establish probable cause" against Reyes et al.

But it filed murder charges against the syndicated gunman, Machel Mesamosa and his brothers, and Reyes' former bodyguard who allegedly acted as the link between the ex-governor and the gunmen.

The first DOJ panel probably had "millions" of reasons for giving Reyes et al. off the hook.

I betray for the second DOJ panel which exonerated the filing of murder charges against Reyes and his alleged co-conspirators.

I believe that people with integrity still exist inside the DOJ even without integrity at the Department of Justice.

PNP-Public Information Chief Chief Supt. Reuben Theodore Sindac also is sure no "shabu" in a police operation in Barangay Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City, where he also resides.

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* * *

At the height of his wife's power, Mr. Arroyo filed cases left and right against journalists who criticized him.

The door is now on the other foot. He is now facing various criminal cases, and the first one was filed Tuesday for his alleged involvement in the NBN-ZTE deal that was later scrapped.

If that's not karmic justice, I don't know what is.

* * *

There is a case involving an attorney, bullying British national that has been pending resolution since an incident in September 2009 at Mactan's duty in Makati City's Mandaluyong.

The foreigner, Kerry Morgan, who is married to a Filipino woman, verbally abused and maltreated another Jonelbee "Jojo" Juan Guevara over an inconsequential matter.

Guevara was calling out to a bystander whom she and her companion knew personally.

Morgan told her to shut up. "You're shouting to my ear," he said.

When Guevara retorted out, Morgan threatened to have her killed.

The case that Guevara filed against Morgan remains unresolved for three years now.

METROBRIEFS

CCTV-wary thieves take P10M from 3 Cubao shops

NOT ONE but three shops were robbed at the Quadrant Building in Cubao, Quezon City, on Monday night. SPO4 Alberto Cruz, Quezon City Police District Station anti-robbery section chief said the robbers took more than P10,000 worth of cash and valuables from a money changer shop, a shipping line's ticketing office and a dry goods store. He added that the thieves were apparently familiar with the layout of the shops as they avoided being caught on the closed-circuit television (CCTV) camera of one of the establishments. Data Cruz said the robbers opened the vaults of two of the shops but did not forget the vault of the third one because the CCTV was focused on it. They also broke into a destruction in the building although they did not take anything. According to Insp. Cruz, the suspects entered the building by destroying the lock of the back door located on Floor. The robbery was discovered only the following day. Nancy C. Carvajal

UP Vanguard turns 100

THE UP Vanguard Inc. (UPVI), the distinguished alumni association of graduates of the University of the Philippines Reserve Officer Training Corps (UP ROTC), is hosting all Vanguards part in the centennial homecoming and 90th annual convention on March 11 on the Diliman campus. Among the events are the annual UPVI convention at Malcolm Hall, the parade-in-review and capability demonstrations by the UP ROTC Corps of Cadets, the Vanguard "Touch Walk," and "Centennial Orchestra" performances and gala night. For more details, please call the UPVI Secretariat at 920-4300 or 9200000 and ask for Malou Macaslan.

John Robert Powers - English Learning Program Produces Topnotch TOEIC Students

By Grace M. Sagaral

The English Learning Program of John Robert Powers takes pride in the success of its students at the top of English for International Communication (TOEIC) Listening and Reading administered by the International Testing in John Robert Powers, Makati last January 21, 2012.

Training for test is Rhaprelle Blanco, a student of JRP Quezon City, who got an almost perfect score of 990 out of 990. Her score placed her in the 10 percentile rank in the Philippines. The nine other students who participated on average score of 940 out. Aside Rhaprelle (Makati), Diana Lawrence D. Alfonso, Cristina Alley Dayanga (Manila), Rod William Gimbanog, Cecilia Cunanan (QC), Joan Carla Calleja (Makati), Jessica Mae Mallabrigog (QC), Clint Rosendale (Malabon), and Robert Dela Cruz (QC).

The average score, 940, means that these students are at the Intermediate Working Proficiency level, and that they "can typically understand the main ideas of concrete topics in both concrete and abstract topics. Interacting with native speakers in their fields of specialization. They can also interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers possible without strain for either party. They can produce clear, detailed texts on a wide range of subjects and explain different viewpoints on a topic in it," according to Academic International Partners, the

average score is a very good one considering that these students are not native language users of English.

TOEIC is one of the most recognized tests in the Asia, Japan, China and other countries use the test to select skilled workers. It is being used as a tool to determine the English proficiency of students, employees, and other professionals and as a measure of effectiveness to assess the everyday skills of people working in an international environment. It is also recognized by TESDA, CHED Department of Homeland Security, US Border Agency, the UK and Australian Immigration, Makati Chamber of Commerce, Manila Hotel, the Federation of Colleges and Associations of Registered Nurses of Hospitals.

TOEIC is given to JRP students who belong to the Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Advanced proficiency levels and have finished one or more stages of the English Language Program.

RESCUERS recover the body of a victim of a ferry accident on the banks of the Meghna River in Munshiganj district, about 32 kilometers south of Dhaka, Bangladesh, on Tuesday. AP

Bangladesh ferry death toll rises

KHAIRU CHAR, Bangladesh—Rescue workers in Bangladesh on Wednesday found eight more bodies after a ferry sank in a huge river and rescued scores more who became trapped inside as the death toll hit 68.

The packed Shalnikjan 1 vessel capsized in the early hours of Tuesday morning after being hit by an oil barge when crossing the Meghna River, 40 kilometers southeast of the capital Dhaka.

Efforts to raise the ferry from the river bed to allow for a full search have so far failed, and divers said they had found the eight bodies near the scene of down.

The double-decker ferry, which had about 300 passengers on board, plunged to the bottom after being hit at about 2.30 a.m.

"The death toll is now 68," local deputy police chief Tanjul Islam told AFP, adding that many people were still missing. Based on reports from desperate relatives who gathered on the river bank to watch the rescue work.

Emergency teams began a second rescue vessel that arrived during the night will enable the ferry to be brought to the surface.

"We intend to lift the vessel and bring it to the shore," Navy Commander Golam Hossain, who is leading the operation, told AFP.

"But it is silted on its side and the river is very deep. We lost a lot of steel bodies are stuck inside," he said. "It is heavy as it was also laden with a cargo of hundreds of sacks of chalk."

The exact number of people on the ferry was unclear as manifest lists are seldom maintained properly in Bangladesh and many travelers buy their tickets when on board.

"As soon as the ferry started to sink with a loud noise, we woke up from sleeping," said survivor Rina Begum as she stood near the accident site on Wednesday.

"Everyone was screaming. I jumped through a window, but my husband could not. I was rescued by a vessel one and a half hours later. I have 15 relatives missing. We were part of a wedding party. Everyone is crying," she said, adding the distraught family and friends of victims, worried at the river's edge for a second day.

Shahbodol Alam, secretary of the Inland Water Transport Authority, said the vessel, which was built in 1991, appeared to have sunk rapidly after the collision.

An investigation has been ordered, he added. AFP

Syria's Assad formally replies to UN proposals

DAMASCUS—Syrian President Bashar al-Assad responded to UN-Arab League proposals to end the bloodshed in his country as members said nearly 50 more people were killed and a pro-regime daily reported the capture of a rebel city.

The move comes as rights group Amnesty International on Wednesday alleged detainees in Syria's war-ridden countryside on dissent faced a "nightmarish world of systematic torture" that has cut the country back decades.

UN-Arab League envoy Kofi Annan, who met with Assad in Damascus over the weekend, said he had made "concrete" proposals to the Syrian leader on ways to halt the attacks and secure humanitarian access to cities where the United Nations says thousands have been killed in the past year.

"These proposals are being considered," Ahmad Fawzi, spokesperson for the envoy told AFP declining to comment on the substance of the Syrian response. Annan is expected to make a statement later on Wednesday in Geneva.

Despite international pressure and growing clamor for foreign intervention, Assad's regime has pushed on with a brutal crackdown on a year-long revolt that has killed more than 7,000 people, mostly civilians, according to activists.

"The scale of torture and other documentation in Syria has been to a level not witnessed for years and is reminiscent of the dark era of the 1970s and 1980s," Amnesty International said in a report based on testimony from survivors who fled to Jordan.

The experience "is now very similar to that of detainees under former president Hafez al-Assad—a nightmarish world of systematic torture," said Ann Harrison of Amnesty's Middle East and North Africa program.

Annan said he had a "useful meeting" with six representatives of the opposition Syrian National Council headed by Burhan Ghalioun, who he said had "guaranteed their full cooperation." Meanwhile, the United States dismissed Assad's announcement of elections on May 7 under a new constitution passed in February.

"The Damascus elections for a rubber-stamp parliament in the middle of the kind of violence that we're seeing across the country—it's ridiculous," US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said in Washington.

"They would be the third such push since Assad came to power in 2000, but the first under a multiparty system as authorized under the new charter.

In the latest clashes, 22 members of the security force were killed in two separate ambushes in the southern region of Daraa, and in Idlib province of northwestern Syria, another hotspot of rebel opposition, monitors said. AFP

US expert finds Iran explosive site

WASHINGTON—A US nonproliferation expert said on Tuesday he has identified a building at the Parchin military site in Iran suspected of containing, currently or previously, a high-explosive test chamber the IAEA nuclear watchdog wants to visit.

David Albright, founder of the Institute for Science and International Security, said the unidentified building was located 1,000 meters southeast of a relatively small and isolated compound at Parchin that fit a description in the November 2011 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report.

The building has its own containment vessel for containing and then is a battle between the building and a neighboring building, Albright said in a report.

The compound is located about 1km from Iskanderieh array from high-explosive related facilities at Parchin which the IAEA stated in 2005, Albright's report said.

Iran refused access to Parchin, southeast of Tehran, during two rounds of talks with IAEA inspectors. Western diplomats say Iran may be delaying access to give it time to sanitize the facility of any incriminating evidence of explosive tests that would indicate efforts to design nuclear weapons.

"We have information that some activity is ongoing there," IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said recently, referring to Parchin.

The IAEA has evidence that the test chamber was placed at Parchin in 2000 and that a building was subsequently constructed around it, Albright's report said. Reuters

REUNION Brooks (right), the former News of the World editor, and her husband Charlie Brooks leave the Stafford Hotel in central London in this July 13, 2011, file photo. REUTERS

Former Murdoch aide Brooks, husband nabbed

LONDON—British police investigating phone hacking arrested former Rupert Murdoch aide Rebekah Brooks on Tuesday and detained her husband, a close friend of Prime Minister David Cameron, reports said.

Brooks and her husband Charlie, he were reportedly among six people arrested at dawn on suspicion of perverting the course of justice by officers probing the scandal at Murdoch's now-closed tabloid the News of the World.

All six were released on bail later on Tuesday. Scotland Yard announced.

"The coordinated arrests were made between approximately 7 a.m. and 7 a.m. this morning," London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement.

Brooks resigned as chief executive of Murdoch's British newspaper unit, News International, in July, ending a swelling crisis which saw her edit both the News of the World and its daily sister paper The Sun.

She quit just three days before being arrested for the first time on suspicion of the illegal hacking of mobile phone voicemails and bribing public officials. She has always denied any wrongdoing.

News International was forced to API that two current "unauthorized" staff had been arrested, identifying one of them as its head of security, Mark Hanna, but declining to name the other.

The company and Brooks' spokesperson David Wilson were both unable to confirm reports in the British media that Brooks and Charlie Brooks were among those arrested.

Scotland Yard said they had detained a 43-year-old woman and a 49-year-old man at their home addresses in Oxfordshire, west of London but refused to confirm their identities.

It said the others arrested, also on the suspicion of England, were aged between 38 and 40.

"All six—five men and one woman—were arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice," it said.

Brooks and her husband, a racehorse trainer, live in a wealthy area of rural Oxfordshire near Cameron, who has described Charlie Brooks as a "good friend" whom he has known since his schooldays at the elite Eton College.

The arrests will likely be embarrassing for the prime minister, who flew in Washington on Monday for talks with President Barack Obama.

Cameron's spokesperson refused to comment, saying: "It's an operational matter for police." Murdoch first drove the News of the World in July after evidence emerged of widespread phone hacking at the tabloid, but his British newspapers continue to be dogged by allegations they covered up the practice.

Last month, documents emerged suggesting that News of the World executives actively sought data the end of November 2005 to delete a audio which could be used in legal action against the tabloid.

A total of 22 people have now been arrested in the hacking probe. AFP

Obama dispels Afghan anger over massacre

WASHINGTON/KABUL—President Barack Obama on Tuesday dispelled Afghan anger over a US soldier's massacre of 16 civilians even as protests erupted in Afghanistan over the incident and Taliban insurgents threatened to retaliate by beheading American troops.

The first person ever handed custody related in the ancient city of Jalalabad, where around 22,000 demonstrators chanted "Death to America" and demanded Afghan President Hamid Karzai report a planned strategic pact that would allow US advisers and possibly special forces to remain in Afghanistan beyond 2014.

Suspected insurgents opened fire on an Afghan investigation looking into Sunday's killing spree in Kandahar's Panjwai district. Two died of lung wounds of Two of Karzai's brothers, Black Will Karzai and Abdul Qayum Karzai, and security officials who had gone to the area of the massacre.

Karzai's brothers were unharmed in a brief battle that began during meetings with local people at a mosque near Kajaki and Alokozai villages. Two soldiers were killed and a civilian wounded. The area is a Taliban stronghold and a supply route.

In Washington, Obama told reporters: "The United States takes this as outrageous as it was our own citizens and our own dead. done who were murdered." Obama administration officials also sought to dispel fears the US withdrawal was flagging.

Recent setbacks in Afghanistan have spattered talk in accelerate a 2014 goal for the end of most foreign combat troops from Afghanistan.

British Prime Minister David Cameron said it is important to leave Afghanistan with the ability to provide its own security and people also need to know the end is in view.

"I think people want an end game," Cameron told reporters on his plane before he arrived in the United States to visit Obama.

"They want to know that our troops are going to come home. They have been there a very long time." US officials said the President is focused on rail following by the end of this summer. The remaining 23,000 "surge" troops Obama sent to Afghanistan in 2009, as the president has promised, and has not yet begun to plan for further withdrawals.

Obama said he told Karzai in a telephone call on Sunday that he was "heartbroken over the loss of innocent life" in the massacre, which left 16 dead, mainly women and children, and that the incident "is not who we are as a country and it does not represent our military." Reuters

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Quisco

Santorum wins crucial primaries in the South

WASHINGTON—Rick Santorum won crucial primaries in Alabama and Mississippi in the race for the Republican presidential nomination, dealing a devastating blow to Newt Gingrich and securing his position as the chief conservative alternative to front-runner Mitt Romney.

SANTORUM

Tuesday's results were a setback for Romney who had hoped to show he could stanch the support of evangelical Christian voters in Southern Deep South in his quest to be his party's choice to challenge President Barack Obama in November's election.

But they were especially bad news for Gingrich, who desperately needed a win to show he remains a viable candidate.

"We did it again," Santorum crowed before cheering supporters in Lafayette, Louisiana, which holds its primary March 24. He said it was time for conservatives in castle in an effort to defeat Romney. Gingrich said he had no plans to leave the race.

In Alabama on Tuesday night, with 97 percent of the precincts counted, Santorum had 35 percent of the vote, while Gingrich and Romney each had 29 percent. Atkinson from 99 percent of Mississippi's precincts showed Santorum with 33 percent, Gingrich 31 percent and Romney 30 percent.

The fourth candidate, Texas Rep. Ron Paul, did not compete actively in the two contests and lagged far behind in single digits.

Romney still holds a commanding lead in delegates to the convention in Tampa, Florida, in August. The former Massachusetts governor is much better funded and has a superior campaign organization. What's more, he carries the backing of the party establishment. But the conservatives have distrusted his non-firm moderate views on important social issues like abortion and gay rights.

Romney still is tied to behind Romney have been voters in the Deep South, where he has yet to win a primary. He won in Virginia, where Santorum and Gingrich failed to qualify for the ballot, and in Florida, where the second-counties with many transplanted retirees from northern states but lost those regions in not-first-in Florida more culturally aligned with the old South.

Romney congratulated Santorum in a written statement, but noted that "with the delegates now tonight, we are even closer to the nomination."

Romney's allies say the candidate's steady collection of delegates in the Republican National Convention makes it almost impossible for his rivals to catch up to him. But several party rules, which allow many states to allocate delegates proportionally instead of winner-take-all, make it difficult for Romney to secure the delegates he needs to secure the nomination before mid-summer, if then. AP

A 32-VOLUME printed edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. It was first published in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1768.

Encyclopedia opts to end print editions

CHICAGO—Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. said on Tuesday that it will stop publishing printed editions of its flagship encyclopedia for the first time since the set was originally published more than 200 years ago.

The book-form of Encyclopedia Britannica has been in print since it was first published in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1768. It will stop being available when the current stock runs out, the company said. The Chicago-based company will continue to offer digital versions of the encyclopedia.

Officials said the end of the printed, 32-volume set has been foreseen for some time.

"This has nothing to do with Wikipedia or Google," Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. president Jorge Cauz said. "This has to do with the fact that new Britannicas sells its digital products to a large number of people."

The way now for the printed encyclopedia was 1990, when 120,000 sets were sold, Cauz said. That number fell to 40,000 just six years later in 1996, he said. The company started offering digital publishing the 1970s. The first CD-ROM versions was published in 1989 and a version went online in 1994.

The final hardcover encyclopedia set is available for sale at Britannica's website for $1,395.

"The sales of printed encyclopedias have been negligible for several years," Cauz said. "We knew this was going to come."

The company plans to mark the end of the print version by making the contents of its website available free for one week, starting on Tuesday.

Online versions of the encyclopedia now have more than 100 million people around the world, the company said, and are available on mobile devices. The encyclopedia has become increasingly social as well, Cauz said, because users can send comments to editors.

"A printed encyclopedia is obsolete the minute that you print it," Cauz said. "Whereas our online edition is updated continuously."

Dennis Baron, professor of the Language, Literature & History section of the Illinois State University notes there will always be people who prefer using print sources over electronic sources. However, the proliferation of publishers of electronic databases has resulted in an explosive boom in online searching. AP

Swiss bus crash kills 28 Belgian tourists

EMERGENCY services work on the wreckage of a bus that crashed on Tuesday night into the wall of a motorway tunnel in Sierre in western Switzerland.

MEGE, Switzerland—A bus carrying Belgian children home from a school ski trip crashed into the wall of a tunnel in the Valais region of Switzerland, killing 28 people, 22 of them children, police said on Wednesday.

The bus, transporting 52 people, mostly school children aged about 12 from Limburg and Hesbaye in Flanders, crashed into on Tuesday evening in the canton of Valais, which borders Italy, police said in early morning news conference.

"It is an event which will really shake the whole Belgian population when they wake up this morning to such extremely sad news," Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders told French radio Europe 1. Reynders said the bus was one of three carrying together and the other two had returned to Belgium. The bus was heading back to Belgium from a skiing holiday camp in Val d'Anniviers, a Valais ski resort. The front third of the bus was completely smashed in.

The crash was one of the worst since 1982 when 39 German tourists were killed on a railway crossing when a train hit their coach.

Twenty-four more children aboard the Belgium-bound bus were injured, some seriously, and were being treated in hospitals, police said. The bus was travelling on a highway towards Sion from Sierre when it crashed into the tunnel wall.

Two drivers in the bus also were killed. The cause of the accident was not yet known, police said.

Some 200 rescuers worked through the night at the crash scene, while 12 ambulances and eight helicopters hauled the injured to hospital.

The Belgian ministry of defense said it would make available two aircraft so that the families of the victims could be flown to the crash site later on Wednesday.

Switzerland's mountain region faces a history of deadly crashes. In 2003, a bus crashed in a Polish tunnel, killing 12 and injuring 15. In 2001, a truck crashed in the Gotthard tunnel, under the Alps, causing a blaze which killed 11 people. Reuters

Obama's approval rating now at 50%, poll shows

WASHINGTON—For the first time since early July, more Americans approve of the job President Barack Obama is doing than disapprove, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos poll that shows his approval rating now at 50 percent.

The poll, taken March 8-11 on the heels of reports that 227,000 jobs were added to the U.S. economy in February, indicates that Obama's rating has risen by 2 percentage points during the past month. The percentage of Americans who disapprove of the Democratic president was 48 percent, down from 49 percent in February.

Some other polls have shown a record dip in Obama's approval rating, and linked that to rising gasoline prices.

But he notes that debate, rife or economic trends during the past month's have been relatively positive. Obama appears to be benefiting from that, and perhaps from a bitter Republican presidential campaign that at times has focused on divisive social issues such as abortion.

"The economy is improving," said Ipsos pollster Cliff Young.

"Not by leaps and bounds but people feel that things are getting better."

The Reuters/Ipsos poll also found that Americans' confidence in the direction of the country is ticking upward. Reuters

DRIGAN Seavey runs his dogs to the finish line to win the 40th annual Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in Nome, Alaska.

25-year-old is youngest to win Iditarod

NOME, Alaska—Dallas Seavey won the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race on Tuesday, becoming the youngest musher to win the nearly 1,000-kilometer race across Alaska.

Seavey turned 25 on March 4, the day the race officially entered north of Anchorage. He was the first musher to reach Nome, his sled dogs trotting into the Bering Sea coastal community at 7:29 p.m.

The winner greeted family and friends briefly, then turned to tug his dogs.

"They mean the world to me," said Seavey, who finished in nine days, four hours and 29 minutes.

The previous youngest winner was the race's only three-time champion, Rick Swenson, who won his first Iditarod at the age of 26 in 1977. Swenson, now 61, is in this year's race, and was running in the middle of the pack.

Asked about his record-breaking victory, Seavey said it's been a good since he started racing competitively in 2005.

"When you put your mind to something ... good things will happen," he told the crowd under Nome's burled arch finish line.

Veteran Iditarod musher Lance Mackey was among the first to congratulate Seavey, who finished in nine days, four hours and 29 minutes.

Mackey, who won the race in 2007, 2008 and 2009, said Seavey has been "a big part of the sport for a long time."

"It's kind of what we do," Mackey said. "Dallas' father [Mitch] and I have talked about that legacy.

Two of 1976 winner Rick Mackey's sons have also won. Rick Mackey in 1983 and Lance Mackey from 2007-2011.

Dallas Seavey was the first rookie to leave White Mountain after completing a mandatory eight-hour layover to rest his dogs. The second rookie out was Ally Zirkle, and Seavey maintained his lead for the last 124 km of the trail from White Mountain to the finish line in Nome. AP

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Azkals dreaming big after making history

Team within two wins of Asian Cup …

By Cedelf P. Tupas

KATHMANDU—Two wins.

That's what separates the Philippines' team bagging the 2012 AFC Challenge Cup, tallest champion gets an automatic berth in the prestigious AFC Asian Cup in 2015 in Australia.

The job will be easier said than done though for the Azkals, who came here on the lowest seeded squad and brought down a couple of former champions to make the semifinals for the first time.

Standing in the way of the Azkals in the semifinals on Friday is 2010 finalist Turkmenistan, which defeated the Philippines, 5-0, in 2008 and blasted past Nepal and Malaysia to gain a group seed in Group A here.

The Azkals, relying on mail-situated attack football, have turned out to be the surprise package of the tournament in the land-locked city in the Himalayas.

A 8-2 loss to defending champion North Korea was followed by a resounding 2-nil drubbing of India and a come-from-behind 2-1 nipping of another former champion in Tajikistan.

Azkals coach Michael Weiss and manager Dan Palami stayed to temper the expectations after the back-to-back victories.

"I know the people and the mentality [of the team]. They are proud. They are extremely excited and cool at the same time in order to win it," said Weiss, whose squad was treated to a surprising dinner by India-based Filipino diplomats at a restaurant in the city's tourism district of Thamel.

Match bans

The Azkals will miss two key players for the clash against Turkmenistan with James Younghusband and Angel Guirado suspended by yellow cards against North Korea and Tajikistan.

Defending champion North Korea and Palestine—two teams that were killed to go further in the tournament—will dispute the other semifinal berth at the Dasharath Stadium with the winner advancing to the final on Sunday.

Regardless of the result on Friday, the Azkals are sure to play on Sunday.

While the Challenge Cup is for less developed football nations, the Asian Cup features the biggest squads in the continent like Japan, South Korea and Australia.

Sure-fire solve misses knocks on Jason Sabin Bresel—and Jeaux Gonzalo Wright, the Azkals, who were given a few day yesterday remains less of health concerns in the Azkals to their biggest match since they have. Earnest in the second round of World Cup Qualifying.

Weiss has ruled out recalling more players to the side, particularly FC Danish Juffalek Imran Caguru, who recently signed with FSV Frankfurt in the German Bundesliga.

ADVANCED A30

… But Tajiks' coach says PH has 'no chance'

By Cedelf P. Tupas

KATHMANDU—There's one person who won't a fan of the Philippine Azkals' playing style in the AFC Challenge Cup here.

After watching his team get the boot from the Philippines Tuesday, Tajikistan's Iranian coach Ersad Alapadze quickly dismissed the Azkals as a title contender in the tournament the Tajiks won in 2006.

"No chance," Alapadze told a couple of Filipino reporters Sunday night at the Everest Hotel where the team playing in Group B are billeted.

"Turkmenistan is very good. The Philippines do not play football."

Alapadze, who speaks little English, even went to the extent of gesturing hand signals to illustrate that the Tajiks are supremely above the level of the Filipinos in football.

MATCH A30

Imports shine as SMBeer gets back at Saigon Heat

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE ABSENCE of two reliables hardly hurt San Miguel Beer as Gee Abanes and Jarrid Famous powered the Beermen to a 75-68 drubbing of the Singapore Slingers in the Asean Basketball League preseason at the Trones Sports Arena.

Abanes provided a third-quarter breakaway while Famous also helped keep the Beermen far from reach for a 52-30 spread after a slim 21-20 halftime advantage.

The Beermen picked up their ninth win in 12 games even minus key cogs Arwind Dimaunahan and Ronjon Gotoma, who both earned a one-game suspension after flagging in a brawl-clouding bout with the Alaska Philippine Patriots last week.

"I think it showed the depth of our team," said San Miguel coach Bobby Parks.

Johnson posted a double-double of 19 points and 13 rebounds, while Abanes highlighted his 17 minutes with three-fisting jams down the stretch.

BJ Bonnis also struck over a struggling Leo Avenido, the Beermen's top local performer who found his shooting touch late in the game.

Rikalo Ford 13 points on top of four assists and four steals, while Avenido scored nine.

The Beermen also managed their first-round loss to the Slingers, 63-71, in Singapore last month when Filipino import Donald Dolor sizzled with 23 points.

Dolor was shut down by Clarence Palcko this time on a 1-of-5 shooting clip in 37 minutes of action.

"We made our shots and controlled Dolay," Parks said after the Slingers streaked to their fourth straight setback. "He really beat us in Singapore and we just struggled with our shooting at that time."

The Beermen were trying to keep the solo lead at press time in a Thursday road game versus the resurgent Saigon Heat.

Also scoring unregistered for the Beermen were top scorer Andrew Johnson, Andy Lumag and Erick Pedrajasa.

Scorers:

SAN MIGUEL (75)—Johnson 19, Famous 11, Abanes 10, Bonnis 8, Rikalo 4, Avenido 2, Yap 2, Barroca 2, Ilagan 0, Isla-Perez 0, Gonzales 0.

SINGAPORE (68)—Dolor 23, Ho 15, Wong 13, Lim 4, Daley 3, Ali 2, Lin 1, Hon 0, Robinson 0, Ajeli 0.

Scores: 19-8, 31-20, 52-30, 75-68

Barbosa keeps solo La Union chess lead

GRANDMASTER Oliver Barbosa conquered Fide Master Paulo Bersamina in the seventh round to keep the sole lead in the Jan. 7-8L La Union Open Rapid Chess Championships on Wednesday at the Ocean Cove in San Fernando, La Union.

His victory after 40 moves of a Caro-Kann pushed Barbosa's total to 6.5 points, a half point ahead of IM Darwin Laylo and International Master Oliver Dimakiling.

Barbosa began to separate himself from the pack by beating erstwhile comrade Laylo in the fifth round. He downed International master opponent GM Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr.

Laylo beat Andrew Caoteon in the sixth round but settled for a draw against IM Rolando Mollo after 25 moves of Queen's Indian in the following round.

Dimakiling, on the other hand, obtained a plus over five scores of the Darwin to earn his spot.

Still in contention with 6 points were Mollo, IM Reynald Iniguez and International Master Mariano Antonio Villanueva and local bet Ronald Andaya.

Also at stake in the event supported by Gov. Edmund C. Ortega of La Union, Mayor Pablo C. Ortega of San Fernando City, Rep. Victor R. Ortega, Mayor Pamplita Diaz, Francisco Emmanuel R. Ortega and official hotel Villa Estrella Beach Resort are prizes for the top non-master, lady, senior (above 50 years old), junior (15 to 20 years old) and female (14 under).

U-14: Olivarez scrapes past Korean foe

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD Eric Olivarez survived two match points to escape through a nailbiter against Korean Lim Min-seok, 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 10-11, yesterday and progress to the semifinals of the boys' singles in the ITF/ATF 14-and-under tennis championships at the Filoil Ellenwood Tennis Center.

The incoming high school sophomore at Ateneo's College overcame his jitters in the opening set and patiently worked his way back into a groove to dowse dismantle the Korean's game and force a tiebreak.

"I was not hitting well at first but I tried to get back and saw that I could win [it]," said Olivarez a nephew of Philippine Tennis Association president Rep. Edwin Olivarez.

He led the tiebreak at 7-2 but soon found himself on the edge of defeat when the Korean punched back for counterpoint, 9-8, and again at 10-9.

Olivarez, who reached the second round last week, fired backhands to clinch it 11-10 only to see Lim cling on, before finally sealing the victory on the Korean's unforced error.

He will face top seed and last week's champion Oh Chan-seong of Korea, who handily eliminated Chinese Taipei's Hung Cai-jung, 6-2, 6-2.

Also making the semis was Australia-Ateneo's of Uzbekistan, who bested second seed and last week's finalist Chang Yin-seong of Korea, 6-0, 7-5, 10-6).

In girls' action, last week's champion and top seed Cao Si-Qi of China dumped Bui Doan of Russia, 6-2, 6-4 to gain a rematch against third seed Indian Pengnin Sidhpuli who ousted Thai sixth pick Rajdumri Suwungkaew, 6-1, 6-3.

Last week's finalist Li Yue Wo of China also made it to the finals with a 3-7, 6-3, 10-7 triumph over Hitesni Mor of India. She will take on Malaysia's Nur Syasha Nisrat who bested surprise Uzbekistani bet Seong-young, 6-1, 6-2.

ELI JAMEZ

ANGEL Iniarak contests the ball during Tuesday's match against Tajikistan. Iniarak, who scored one goal and assisted on the other in the Azkals' 2-1 victory over Tajikistan, is one of two Azkals accused of sexual harassment by former PSC chief Cesar Ramos. The other is Lorenzo May. - JOEL SAGA, CTN

PH booters want sexual harassment probe to continue

Palami: We want truth to come out

By Cedrik F. Tapia

KATHMANDU—Their performance on the pitch may have taken some of the spotlight out of the sexual harassment complaint filed against two of their players, but the Philippine Azkals insist that the investigation should push through regardless of the outcome of their AFC Challenge Cup campaign here.

Lorenzo May and Angel Guirado have been accused by AFC match commissioner Criley Ramos of sexual harassment for their conduct in the pre-match inspection in the friendly against Malaysia.

"Whatever happens at home with the investigation, it doesn't go on because we want the truth to come out," said Azkals manager Dan Palami.

The Azkals reached the semifinals for the first time in the tournament, after winning over former champions India and Tajikistan. But Palami said that should not exempt the players involved from punishment if there was, indeed, wrongdoing on their part.

"With or without good results here, we want to get to the bottom of this and finally put a closure on the issue that is now attached on the team," he said Palami.

In his complaint before the AFC Disciplinary Committee, Ramos alleged that May "inserted my right side and said in a loud voice 'Must be a B Cup' to which the players laughed loudly."

Guirado, Ramos claimed, was only "arranging his underwear" when Ramos conducted the inspection. Guirado has disputed the allegation, saying he was wearing his game shorts at the time of the incident.

May has apologized to Ramos and called the incident a misunderstanding, but the controversy was only directed at teammates Denis Wolf, who joked with the person in charge of number placing Gadi de Mayo.

Meanwhile, Philippine Football Federation president Mariano "Nonong" Araneta has promised a $1,000 bonus for the players for reaching the semifinals of the eight-nation tournament.

Azkals dreaming . . .

From page A-11

"It affects the team but we have to cooperate," said Wilson of the ongoing absence of his two wingers. "But we have fantastic spirit and the players are performing even their level. We can even make it with this group."

Except for the World Cup Qualifying, the Azkals have actually managed to produce the results needed in major tournaments and Weiss could not help but draw parallelisms to his own national team—Germany, which has reached the semifinals of the last two World Cups and the finals of the European Cup.

"We're like Germany. We do well in major tournaments," said Weiss.

"The first two games are so crazy but then they find their rhythm and get in to the competition. So obviously the Philippines is a competitive team."

The Azkals host a series of exhibition matches against Major League Soccer side Los Angeles Galaxy, El Madrid, Inter-ma Gimnis and the Olympic team of Uzbekistan and should take full use seeing action here.

"When our backs are against the wall, we manage to pull through and that's what has enshrined this team to be here," said Palami.

Weiss said that the task is by no means easier. "It grows with every bigger task. So the next task is bigger than Tajikistan, which is Turkmenistan."

But Tajiks' . . .

From page A-11

The Bronze coach, who is only 20 days into his job with the Tajik national team, didn't give the Azkals credit for the win, saying his squad beat themselves.

"My players were tired," said Mirjalolo, whose squad played a first leg just before reaching the Azkals in the second half. "It would have been different if we had more rest."

Alipalo took a swipe at the Azkals' defensive and counter-attacking style. "The Philippines only knows how to play long balls."

Azkals coach Michael Weiss said the Azkals are ready to pick up their rhythm what with players coming in and out of the squad because of club commitments.

"We currently play in Asian football, but we can play our very well tactically-disciplined football," said Weiss in reference to the Spanish club, considered as the best team in the world because of its possession-passing game and good-looking dribbles.

Guirado lets his game do the talking

By Cedrik F. Tapia

KATHMANDU—Angel Guirado couldn't have picked the right time to play his finest game for the Philippine Azkals.

With the Azkals' semifinal hopes hanging in the balance, the tall Filipino-Spanish attacker rattled the equalizer before scoring the game-winner in the 2-1 triumph over Tajikistan Tuesday in the AFC Challenge Cup at the Halchowk Stadium here.

"Angel Guirado was the best man on the team today," said Azkals coach Michael Weiss of his player's first goal, who will make the semifinal match against Turkmenistan because of suspension due to accumulated yellow cards.

"He showed fantastic effort."

A string of injuries have caused a dip in Guirado's performance the past few months and he hasn't been able to replicate his outstanding debut in the Challenge Cup qualifiers in Myanmar last year.

Guirado scored two goals to lift the Filipinos to qualification in final tournament last March. Since then, he has scored only once—against Sri Lanka in the World Cup Qualifiers—and his domestic outings with the Loyal have often been quiet-to-mid.

Guirado is also one of the few players accused by AFC match commissioner Criley Ramos of sexual harassment.

Ramos claimed Guirado was arranging only his underwear when she conducted the pre-match inspection in the friendly against Malaysia—an allegation disputed by Guirado, who said he was wearing his match shorts.

Guirado, however, let his game do the talking. He set up Phil Younghusband for the opener, forcing his foot to his strike partner in the 54th minute.

A determined Guirado later headed home the winner in the 80th minute to boost the Azkals to a massive semifinal appearance.

"I'm just focusing on the team and the group. I was able to help the team," Guirado said. "The past few months have been difficult because of injuries. But now that I am healthy, I'm glad I could give 100 percent on the field."

THE PHILIPPINES Azkals rush Angel Guirado at the goalmouth after the Filipino-Spanish standout scored the marginal goal against Tajikistan. - JOEL SAGA, CTN

Sonsona continues comeback versus Fulgencio Saturday

By Marc Anthony Reyes

"MANNEQUIN" Marvin Sonsona was brave enough to submit getting two stitched above and over eyebrow. Now, the five-time world champion is out to prove he can pick up the pieces and get back into his old fighting form.

Sporting his eye-blood bangs, the 21-year-old boxer/Gen. Santos City fanned the media yesterday to hype his fight against a tall and dangerous Carlos "El Pinto" Fulgencio of Dominican Republic for a super featherweight non-title fight on March 17 at the Hoops Dome in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu.

"I am climbo no boxing," Sonsona told the kuyadors in Filipino, referring to his dimensional speed after his fourth-round knockout loss to Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. in February of 2008. "I didn't do things, but I admit I wanted to celebrate."

The 5-foot-7 Sonsona fasted that his weight ballooned to 150 pounds during his 20-month hiatus that ended last October, values he christened Carlos Jacobo of Mexico in his comeback fight after at Hoops Dome.

"He was just young dava, imagine he was the world title at 19. No he's very immature and I didn't know how to spend his money. Even his parents can't control him," said his manager Sammy Gelosani, who added that he didn't give Sonsona a fight immediately to "punish him."

But now Sonsona (13-3-1, 12 knockouts) vowed that he's serious in taking the comeback trail. "I have decided that boxing is my life. I don't want to be born anymore," added the self-spoken boxer who clinched the WBO super fly title via a unanimous decision win over Jose Lopez in Ontario, Canada, in 2009.

After his fight against Fulgencio, Sonsona is scheduled for another match on May 13 to gauge his preparedness to vein in the United States under the same stable as Argentine champion Sergio Martinez.

Standing in Sonsona's way is redemption is Fulgencio (19-5-1), who lost even his last four fights, three of them via KOs. His five defeats, however, also ended via stoppages.

Hunting the spotlight as co-master is unbeaten Indian "The Sniper" Sahabir, who will make his WBO Asia Pacific and World Silver against challenges Alejandro Morales of Los Mochis, Sinaloa, Mexico.

Gems begin drive against Waves today

By Jasmine W. Payo

A SLEW of talented recruits makes Cebu's Cardillo a title contender some in the PBA D-League Foundation Cup.

But coach Luigi Trillo hopes his crew won't fall short this time as the Gems kick off their bid against Boracay Rum at 4 p.m. at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

GAMES TODAY
(Ynares Sports Arena, Pasig)
1 p.m. — Cebu Gems vs Jose Pluricolo
4 p.m. — Cebuana Lhuillier vs Boracay Rum

"I think we have added quality pieces," said Trillo.

Some Pinatarons, one of two new teams this conference, debuts against Cafe France at 2 p.m.

Defending champion NLEX and Bacolod-city Sports dropped their respective foes in the league opener last Tuesday for the lead in the 10-team field.

The Cezar absorbed several players from Foreign Aces, which cracked last conference's final four spot to skip the tournament.

Arkansas guard Genier Abrams, an MVP candidate last conference, leads the recruits that also includes Jesus Lanalo, Jerkster Apostol, Raymund Macaraeg and Raven Antonio.

Trillo also expects Lorenzo van Kivits Alas to provide the Gems stability even if their squad has the backcourt tandem of Joe Reyes and Terrence Romeo.

For Starters UP's Bonzon got recalled by his school, while Reyes joined the Bangkok Cobras in the Asean Basketball League.

Boracay Rum coach Governor Chiongson hopes his Waves, powered by Ken Acibar and Ildoy Hermosadura, will show more resiliency this conference.

PETRON'S Alex Cabagnot (3) gets hauled as he drives past Alaska's Cyrus Baguio and LA Tenorio (right). JOSEPH VIDAL DAZA

Alaska trips Petron Blaze

By Munsey S. Castillo

BOSTON Cannidio scored 11 crucial fourth-quarter points and the entire Alaska starting unit finished to help digits last night as the Aces repulsed Petron Blaze, 99-96, to finish closer towards a playoff berth in the PBA Commissioner's Cup.

The feisty swingman delivered five of those points inside the final 86 seconds as the Aces completed a comeback from several 12-point deficits to rise to 4-3 and shut the Boosters a second straight loss in a 2-1 card.

And that performance justified coach Joel Banal's decision to "freak the other way" when Cannidio seemed lost in Alaska's flow of things earlier, when the Aces didn't look like they had a chance against Petron which played a playoff-like game.

"We know what Boy Can is capable of doing," Banal told reporters with a smile. "You just have to earn your head the other way when he commits errors. And I am glad that I earned the other way (earlier in the game) and he finished the game for us."

Petron came out in a boisterous-like manner and zoomed several commanding leads, the last at 86-80.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Ynares Sports Arena, Pasig)
1:30 p.m. — B-Meg vs Alaska
7:30 p.m. — NLEX vs Barako Bull

The Boosters then closed out the half sitting on a nine-point bubble and it was in the Alaska locker room where Banal found the chance to prop up his words.

"At the half, I was crying out 'hear to-someone say team that makes we play that way, we didn't make it change," Banal narrated. "Where we played physical in the second half, we were able to catch up and take the lead."

The scores:
First Game
ALASKA (99) — Fraser 0-2 Aguilar 3-6 Castelo 0-1 Ross 1-2 Tenorio 5-7 Reinhardt 2-4 Exana 2-7 Baldwin 1-2 Cannidio 3-6 Ayaay 0-0 Mariano 0-0 Cruz 0-0 Ebona 0-0 Totals 37-86.
PETRON (96) — Cabagnot 10-17 Ighalo 3-8 Ross 5-11 Cabagnot 11-20 Salamat 0-1 Barroca 0-1 Ebona 0-0 Mariano 0-0 Cruz 0-0 Totals 37-86.
Quarters: 18-25, 43-52, 63-68, 80-96

Hot summer worries Lingayen Palaro organizers

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PALARONG Pambansa organizers yesterday expressed concerns over the hot summer weather when it stages the annual sports meet on May 6-13 in Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Education Sec. Armin Luistro said they are taking measures to minimize heat-related injuries during the games even as Dr. Prisco D'Souza, atmospheric, Geophysical, Astronomical Services Administration predicted that temperature could rise between 36 degrees to 38 degrees Celsius in April and May.

It even said Tagaytayan, which like Pangasinan is in Northern Luzon, could experience as hot as 38 degrees.

Luistro said they will utilize indoor venues for the event and also implement their usual five-hour midday breaks.

"We included that in our assessment, but we are using more indoor facilities now," said Luistro during the press conference for the event. He also signed the memorandum of agreement with Pangasinan Gov. Amado Espino.

Bian claimed the host of at least two delegations is now battling 2007 Koronadal Palaro, prompting organizers to take measures like suspending games from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

JACOB Martin displays his trophy with Palawan Pawnshop area manager Nina Rabanda (left) and Dr. Ervin Gonzales.

Martin tops Babolat tennis in Palawan

TOP RANKED Jacob Martin defeated No. 2 Marcus Dell Rosario in a thrilling finale, 6-7(5), 10-6, to rule the Palawan Pawnshop Regional age group tennis tournament presented by Babolat in Palawan last week.

The 11-year-old Martin rebounded from a first-set loss to fight back and frustrate his wild forehand shots to shake off Del Rosario in the decider and post his third career victory.

Playing out of Easter School in San Jose, Martin displayed the poise 4 champion Joaquin Enrico in the quarters, 6-3, 6-0, but struggled past No. 4 Mercyphael Teng in the semis, surviving one, 6-7, 7-5, 7-6, 10-8 win that took two hours and 50 minutes to finish as the event serving as the first leg of Philtex Regional Tennis League.

Azkals: Should it also be thanks Cristy?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

It will not be unusual in the world football encyclopedia in naming the most spectacular games in Asia.

The match could indeed host reasons, topic, although, given to any other Southeast Asian-styled where football is also religion, the victory by the Philippine Azkals would have been certainly celebrated with great merriment-fleeting in the streets.

It was monumental and historic indeed of Mr. Internet proportions, as noted by the young, able locutors earlier from the game site no-fully fashionable.

* * *

The journeys of the Philippine Azkals to the semifinals of the AFC Challenge Cup should get under a chapter on the gallant and heroism shrunk-in-sweat.

Of course, it can not all about the sweat-from-behind. It's conquest of Dangerous Turkmenistan shows.

The long haul road started all the way back home.

The most arduous journey began that fateful Saturday inside the national team fisher room, before the friendly with Malaysia whereas-two Azkals ended up being accused of visceral harassment.

* * *

"It was a great display of resiliency and fighting heart," wrote Oddulf Pagui, "with the injury problems encountered by some players."

The first match, against former World Cup qualifier South Korea, was hard and ended in a blood-letting 0-0 setback.

But the Azkals refused to be cowed.

They rebounded and drew former champion India to set up the semi-or-none contest against Turkmenistan.

* * *

The Azkals had been given only a fair chance against India.

But after the 2-0 victory on Sunday, it became clear the Azkals had also refused to be dampened by the bewildering second homecoming care filed by AFC-zenith-commissioner Cebu Johnson, driven daughter of former President Fidel Ramos.

The Azkals refused to be dismantled and dismayed.

In fact, they visibly rammed and fought harder as one.

* * *

"I'm learning how to win," Mr. Internet-rabidly admonished the Azkals when asked about the unexpected-but-hoped-for-before-the-beliefs-could-depart for their tough AFC stanzas.

Of course, the Azkals had been on the up-and-down-gate-to-the AFC Cup Challenge date.

Their manager Dan Palami, was not too sure how far the Azkals could go in the Challenge Cup he had set phase hosting past the Rite 12 month-against Tajikistan.

Now, they've got to rebook in order to insure their woodland battle against Turkmenistan to-reserve, minus two members who have been suspended after getting the yellows card against Tajikistan.

* * *

Needless to say the Azkals could mark harriest in tomorrow's match.

It might not be another-version, but one more-suspension and they've got a hot chance because they are a lot quicker and faster than the opponents.

Meanwhile, there were those who were already wondering who should get the medals.

Primarily, who's apologia-ist and benefited the controversy professionally should lead the honor roll.

But whether it was an outright ineligibity or a mere misinterpretation that had led to the accusation, there were also questions about the sportsmanship.

Shouldn't Cristy Kinnes be thanked for helping push the Azkals to play with greater-zeal, thereby carrying the Philippine flag with pride and-creditable notoriety?

Or should Cristy Dan Palami, he would most likely answer with a-twinkling smile.

Studio 23 airs world wrestling tomorrow

PREMIUM shows and specials of the WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) hog will be aired on Studio 23 all week long.

Wrestling's biggest superstars and toughest divas battle it out in "WWE RAW" beginning tomorrow at 9:30 p.m., with replays every Tuesday at the same time.

Rookies take the spotlight in the wrestling arena in "WWE NXT" starting Saturday at 6:30 p.m., with replays on Wednesdays at 9:30 p.m.

The "WWE Superstars" will begin this Sunday at 8:30 p.m. with a replay every Thursday at 9:30 p.m.

Studio 23 also airs WWE's special events such as the WrestleMania, Summer Slam, Survivor Series, Royal Rumble and Hell in a Cell starting next month.

Special live screenings will also be sponsored by the Rabadanis Network.

Studio 23 is also set to air "WWE Tough Enough" by the second half of the year. The reality show will be hosted with their "Universal" returns in a reality format. For details, log on to www.studio23.ph

Round of Golf tonight

COMMERCIAL and Global Handing hold A Round of Golf's special edition with Jaya Executive of Pacquiao's Pride, and Bap Eugenio of TourMaster Golf clashing in a mixed game at 6 p.m. on Solar Sports at Global Territory (Ch 26), Sky Cable Digital (Ch 70) and Cablelink (Ch 21).

Also on tap in the show, presented by NAIT and produced by UBE Media, is a new segment in Golf Conditioning, which introduces Sky Ferreras Manila where special training and programs are featured to prep up golfers for the game. To view ARGS's past episodes, log on to www.aroundthegolf.tv. Most follow the show on Facebook and Twitter.

ELIJAH CHUMPE The Jason Chung Blazers ruled the Juniors Division (11& under age group) of the International Little League Association of Manila. The team members are (from left) Higgs Angeles, Jo Buenviaje, Justin Garcia, Yeru Goco, Miguel Habana, Paolo Hernandez, Marco Mallol, Vincent Mariano, Chris Pons, Joaqui Rivera, and Mark Sacramed. They were managed by Ramon Alcaraz, Vlade Egana and Pepe Jean.

SPORTS

LAST HOME GAME?

Dwight dominates as Magic trip Heat

Kobe, Bynum too much for Memphis

ORLANDO, Florida—Dwight Howard, the major subject of transfer talk as the NBA trade deadline nears, scored 24 points and grabbed 21 rebounds to lead the Orlando Magic past the Miami Heat, 104-99, in overtime on Tuesday.

Jameer Nelson added 25 points, including four late in overtime, while Jason Richardson scored 17 points and Ryan Anderson had 16 points and 12 rebounds as Orlando won for the second time in three games against Miami this season.

"We're a great team when we play together and play hard," Howard said. "We did that tonight and we have to do that every night. I'm happy we're playing like this. We just have to keep this going."

Dwyane Wade scored 28 points to lead Miami while Chris Bosh added 21 points for the Heat and LeBron James added 19 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists.

The Heat still have a chance to avenge the loss at home on Sunday against the Magic but by then Howard—who enjoyed his eighth 20-point, 20-rebound night of the season—might be playing elsewhere.

Howard has made no secret that he wants to play for a contender and would like to see Orlando make some moves to strengthen the lineup to compete with powerhouses clubs like Miami and Chicago.

But the all-star center has been linked in various reports as a handful of clubs and rumors with the Magic, who no offer him the most money in a new six-year and assurable salary around him as well.

With Thursday's NBA trade deadline looming, Howard's performance may have been his last with the Magic, but he said his only plans for the next two days were "just play basketball and have fun" instead of ponder trade distractions.

"Despite everything that is going on the guys have played well," Nelson said. "My job it is to play as hard as I can no matter who is on the court."

"I can't control what's going on with Dwight's situation. We want Dwight to stay. But I can't control it. I can only play the best that I can."

Miami led 50-45 at half-time, thanks in part to 11 points by Wade in the first quarter and a 26-15 Heat edge in the second quarter. But the Magic battled back and pulled level at 94-94 in fourth-quarter time.

"Our defense was great in the second half," Howard said. "We got back and we didn't leave the ball one as much."

In Memphis, Kobe Bryant's partnership with Andrew Bynum continued to Monday the Los Angeles duo anchored the Lakers to a thrilling 116-111 double-overtime victory over the Grizzlies.

Bynum powered his way to a season-high 37 points and 16 rebounds while Bryant tallied 34, nine rebounds and five assists to give the Lakers (26-35) a two-road win against a top Western Conference team.

It was the first overnight victory for Los Angeles, who are third in the conference, 1½ games ahead of fourth-placed Memphis.

"We definitely wanted to get this win, that's why we got it," Bynum told reporters after making 15 of his 19 shots from the field.

In Denver, Nene scored 22 points, Ty Lawson had 21 points and seven assists and the Nuggets rallied to beat the Atlanta Hawks in overtime, 118-107.

In Oklahoma City Courtney Lee and rookie Chandler Parsons each scored 21 points and Patrick Patterson blocked Jorge Gutiérrez's point-blank putback attempt in the final two seconds as the Houston Rockets thumped Utah from an 11-point deficit in the last three minutes to hold off the Thunder, 104-103.

In other games, The Toronto Raptors scored back the Cleveland Cavaliers, 86-88, the Indiana Pacers stopped the Portland Trail Blazers, 92-75 and the Dallas Mavericks dubbed the Washington Wizards, 107-98.

AFP, Reuters, AP

ANDREW Bynum (front) of the Los Angeles Lakers tries to muscle his way past Memphis Grizzlies center Marc Gasol.

ORLANDO center Dwight Howard loses the ball in a dunk attempt. Time is ticking on the Magic as to whether or not they will lose their superstar big man as well.

Bucks get Ellis, ship Bogut out

JEREMY Lin and the New York Knicks suddenly find themselves in a troubling position, battling for the eighth playoff spot in the East.

MILWAUKEE—The Milwaukee Bucks traded Andrew Bogut and Stephen Jackson to the Golden State Warriors Tuesday night for sixth-year players headed by high-scoring guard Monta Ellis.

The Bucks also got forward Ekpe Udoh and center Brandon Rush.

The trade represents a parting of ways between the Bucks and Bogut, the No. 1 overall pick in the 2005 draft who has struggled with injuries. It also allows the Bucks to rid themselves of Jackson, who had fallen out of favor with coach Scott Skiles and now gets to rejoin his former team.

"We're extremely excited to acquire a player the caliber of Andrew Bogut, who we think is certainly one of the top centers in the NBA," general manager Larry Riley said.

AP

'Linsanity' fizzles out; NY in trouble

NEW YORK—Seems like this one was a case of temporary Linsanity.

The New York Knicks' fantastic February is no more, replaced by a March meltdown.

They are back to playing the way they were in January, before Jeremy Lin's emergence got them on track. New York has lost six in a row for the second time this season and is in danger of missing the playoffs.

Loaded with expectations, the Knicks have fallen into a share of the eighth and final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, and their spirits are dropping just as quickly.

"We're kind of down right now," Carmelo Anthony said Monday after a 104-99 loss in Chicago.

"My job as one of the leaders of this team is to try to keep everybody up, keep everybody positive."

"We've been in this situation before, early in the season. We've come regrouped, fought through it," Anthony added. "Right now times are tough, so I'm not going to get through it by myself. Nobody is going to get through it by themselves. We need everybody."

Problem is, they have everybody except the pieces don't seem to fit.

Lin's numbers have dropped from last month, Anthony's and Amare Stoudemire's are well below normal, and that trio hasn't proven it can play together. The height of Lin's success came without the All-Stars, and the offense hasn't been as crisp since Anthony returned from a groin injury on Feb. 20, a lopsided 2-4 stretch.

"There's no magic potion," coach Mike D'Antoni said. "Each player has to understand the position we're in, each player has to ramp up and do the best he can do, and I have faith they will do that."

The offense is hardly the only problem. The defense struggled lately at the end of a four-game road trip last week, and even when the Knicks do get stops, they don't grab the rebounds.

A comeback was thwarted Friday in Milwaukee when the Knicks couldn't corral an errant shot by Brandon Jennings as the shot clock was set to expire. The Knicks then surrendered 20 offensive boards Monday, getting outrebounded 56-38.

"As far as missing or nothing shots, that's going to happen throughout the course of a game," Anthony said. "But I think we're taking passes by correct things—which is major things, offensive rebounds, second-chance shots...you know, that gives the other team two more."

The Knicks came out of a second-half slump but seems to flesh 42-40, and there's still more to snap out of this funk with 24 games left. Their talent is undeniable, but so is their absence of cohesion.

Lin aired shots from their first slump. "Time to running out to see if anybody is up for the challenge now.

AP

Federer leads charge of stars, Wozniacki crashes

FEDERER

NADAL

IVANOVIC

AZARENKA

SHARAPOVA

INDIAN WELLS, California—Roger Federer outlasted hard-serving Milos Raonic, 6-7 (4), 6-2, 6-4, in the fourth round of the BNP Paribas Open on Tuesday night, extending his run of winning 20 of 21 matches since last year's US Open.

Rafael Nadal didn't have as much trouble in beating fellow Spaniard Marcel Granollers 6-1, 6-4.

It was similarly easy on the vacuously able for top-seeded Victoria Azarenka and No. 2 seeded Maria Sharapova, who won their matches in little more than an hour to reach the quarterfinals.

Ana Ivanovic defeated Caroline Wozniacki, 6-3, 6-2, in a matching of former Indian Wells champion and former top-ranked players. Ivanovic held at love in complete her biggest win over a top player in months.

Raonic came into his first match against Federer having won 16 of his previous 18 matches this year, but he fell to 4-7 against top-eight players with the loss.

"I thought before the match I had a chance to win that," he said. "I did a few things well in the first set, and after that he just picked it up on the servers. I don't think I served as well after, either."

Federer broke to open the second set and broke again in the seventh game to level the match. In the third, he broke Raonic to go up 4-3. Raonic held at love before Federer won four straight points to close out his 73rd consecutive win against players outside the top 20.

"I was getting in the ball often in the beginning, but just not making the plays," Raonic said. "I was able to improve, and since I got that going maybe his serving also just dropped a step for and gave me more opportunities on his second serves. That was a big second set for me to get momentum."

Federer hasn't been feeling well since he arrived, blaming dehydration among his family rather than the viral illness that has knocked eight players out of the tournament.

"More improvement," he said. "I'm still not 100 percent."

No. 2-ranked Nadal has won his past 10 matches against Granollers.

"I didn't play my best in the second," Nadal said. "I had a few mistakes, especially for the backhand. But I am happy that I finished the match well."

Azarenka, a 6-2, 6-1 winner over Aleksandra Krunic, moved on to play fifth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska, who advanced when American wild card Jamie Hampton retired with cramping in the third set while trailing 7-6, 6-4, 3-3. Azarenka (20-8) and Radwanska (20-5) have the most match wins this year on the WTA Tour.

Sharapova, who lost to Azarenka in a lopsided Australian Open final, beat Roberta Vinci, 6-2, 6-1, and next plays an all-Russian quarterfinal against 20th-seeded Maria Kirilenko, who beat No. 10 Nadia Petrova 6-1, 5-7, 6-2.

AP

Shaq dares Canseco to MMA fight

SHAQUILLE O'Neal sent countless battles under the basket in his brilliant NBA career but is ready to get more physical, saying he is willing to face former MLB All-Star Jose Canseco in a mixed martial arts bout.

Canseco, 47, whose baseball comeback bid with the Quebec City Capitales of the Can-Am League stalled last week when he was banned for declining to take a doping test, has been calling out the four-time MVP champion to manager on his Twitter account.

"I challenged him a long time ago. If he wants it done, he knows where to find me," O'Neal told Reuters on Tuesday in a telephone interview from Florida.

"He can be high off whatever, and I'll be high off Frosted Flakes," O'Neal, 40, said.

O'Neal retired from the NBA last year and is due to receive his doctorate degree in May.

Canseco admitted to using steroids in his Major League Baseball (MLB) career and wrote books about their widespread use.

The Cuban-born Canseco has used Twitter to suggest a four-man MMA tournament in Las Vegas titled "Steel Bath 1" featuring himself, O'Neal, and former National Football League players Herschel Walker against former boxing champion Mike Tyson.

Reuters

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Editor Raul G. Manalo ■ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano
BUSINESS

Stock market surges to another record close

Investors cheered by fresh gains on Wall Street

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LOCAL stock market index yesterday surged to a new high as investors took their cue from the rally on Wall Street which, in turn, was driven by a favorable report on US banks.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index jumped by 43.24 points, or 0.69 percent, to a record close of 5,690.99. It also marked a new intra-day high of 5,703.20.

"Investors, both local and foreign, have found very good returns on their investments. We confident that the index will reach a new high of 5,800 before the year is over," said Ramon Ciscon, president of local stock brokerage PTE & Co. and ePesos PSE president.

The day's rally was led by the property and industrial sectors, which gained by 2.46 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively. All sub-indices were up except for the mining/oil counter, which was battered by the shift in investors' appetite back to blue chips.

PLDT, MPIC, SGI, BDO, BPI, Metrobank, AP, URC, JG Summit, EDC, DMCI and ECR contributed to the PSEi's rise.

PNB, Security Bank and Banco de Oro also gained on heavy trades, joining the 108 stocks that advanced during the day.

On the other hand, 70 stocks declined, including Megaworld and SM Investments.

Value turnover amounted to P7.9 billion.

"Philippine shares soared to another fresh record peak as it tracked Wall Street's gains overnight," said Hoi Metro Securities, which noted that the local index has risen by 13.53 percent since the start of the year.

Overnight, the Dow Jones industrial average rose by 217.97 points, or 1.68 percent, to close at 13,177.68. For the first time, the technology-heavy Nasdaq closed above 3,000, while the Dow ended above 13,000 after the Federal Reserve announced that 15 of the 19 biggest banks in the United States could withstand shocks from a severe recession.

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE	STOCK MARKET
March 14, 2012	March 14, 2012
42.880	45.24

More electricity eyed for Mindanao co-ops

By Amy R. Barros

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES in Mindanao may soon tap as much as 300 megawatts in additional supply to meet up to eight hours of rotating brownouts on the island, the Department of Energy announced.

A DOE circular to be issued next week will in effect free up capacity that may be channeled to critical areas.

In a briefing yesterday, Energy Undersecretary Zenaida Patricia M. Aniti said Sta. Rosa Power Inc. and the Aboitiz-led Thermal Marine Inc. would provide a total of 146 MW in readily available power, which cooperatives could consume.

Also, another 158 MW may be freed up once the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) gets the permission to reduce the capacity allotted for so-called reserve requirement. At present, 320 MW are allocated for that purpose, Aniti said.

"The Mirant energy contracts will come up with a resolution to allow the reduction of the capacity allocated for reserve requirements, for as long as the act will not compromise the integrity of the grid operations," she said.

Mindanao is expected to suffer from a power shortfall of around 276 MW.

The power situation on the island may be tight, but it is "manageable," with the proper handling of demand and rationalization of available supply, particularly those from hydropower complexes, Aniti stressed.

She pointed out that some cooperatives in Mindanao aggravated the supply crunch by failing to observe manners and protocols.

The DOE circular will thus direct the cooperatives to "comply with their obligations under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 and undertake the necessary measures to address the power situation..."

Aside from the 300 MW that can be made available to cooperatives, another 120 MW may come from a private power company, which has offered to move two power barges to Mindanao, Aniti said.

The state-run Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. will act as the equitable allocator of excess capacities to customers.

BSP monetary policy expected to pay off big

By Raoul W. Domingo

THE ECONOMIC momentum that has built up from the easing of monetary policy may boost the country's growth to 5.6 percent in 2012 and up to 7 percent in 2013, the International Institute of Finance said in its research note on the Philippines.

The government's moves in containing the budget deficit has given monetary authorities considerable latitude, according to IIF, which is based in Washington, DC.

In 2013, the government incurred a budget deficit of P197.8 billion, which was less than two-thirds of the previous year level. Taking into account the size of the economy, overspending in 2013 comprised only 2 percent, less than the 3.3 percent recorded in 2010.

Also, the debt stock as of end-2011 settled at P4.991 trillion, or just 50.9 percent of gross domestic product—the lowest ratio in the past 13 years.

Last March 1, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas again eased its overnight borrowing and lending rates by 25 basis points to 4 percent and 6 percent, respectively.

"The government still needs to provide more extensive public services than it does at present. So, the key to fiscal sustainability will continue to rest on the wise hand of the inefficient tax exploration rather than on spending restraint," said IIF a global association of financial institutions. "The benefits from maintaining macroeconomic stability should soon pay off in terms of stronger growth for the economy."

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HONDA

SMB raises P20B through sale of long-term bonds

Firm refinancing obligations falling due in April

By Doris C. Dumlao

San Miguel Brewery Inc. has returned to the local retail bond market for the first time in three years, raising P20 billion from the sale of long-term fixed-rate bonds.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, SMB said the bonds with tenors of five years (due on April 2017), seven years and 10 years were priced at a coupon rate of between 5.50 percent and 6.6 percent.

SMB will issue five-year Series D bonds at 6.05 per year, seven-year bonds at 6.41 percent (series E) and 10-year bonds (series F) at 6.60 percent.

The pricing suggests that the seven-year issue was the most spot among investors. A spokesperson from parent conglomerate San Miguel Corp. said the issue was the thin issue compared to the four-year bond was "demand-driven." This means investors are flocking to the seven-year issue, thus driving down the yield.

A senior banker said there was a strong demand for seven-year debt paper because this was the tenor lacking in many institutional investors' portfolios relative to the five- and 10-year securities.

With many investors spreading their portfolio mix, the banker said this was what must have triggered the influx of orders for SMB's seven-year bonds.

Another banker involved in the deal said the bookbuilding for the bonds was completed alongside the pricing. "Allocations are being given out," the banker said.

The pricing had been approved by the SMB board but the food-maker is still awaiting approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission for the registration of the bonds.

Based on an earlier registration statement, the managers are BDO Bank S.V., BDO Capital and Investment Corp., HSBC, RB Capital Investment Corp. and Standard Chartered Bank. The bonds will be listed on the Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corp.

SMB debuted on the local bond market in 2009 with the issuance of P18.6 billion worth of retail bonds, the single largest bond deal in the local market.

A P13.6-billion tranche of the bond issue, however, is maturing in April this year. SMB aims to refinance this tranche using part of the proceeds from the new bond float. The remainder will be used to help pay ahead of maturity a $900-million dollar notes due 2013.

SMB grew its net profit last year by 17.4 percent to P12.2 billion on the back of higher volume and selling prices. Its consolidated net sales revenue grew by 6.3 percent to reach P71.9 billion last year. Income by higher-margin beer sales and other volume, for both domestic and international operations.

In the meantime, parent SMC and the Ortiz group of businesses are in talks with banks to arrange the financing for their railway projects. SMC disclosed that it has "initiated discussions with banks in relation to a term loan that it had raised P300 million to help finance the acquisition of a controlling stake in the McAlcoholics South Luzon Expressway.

JG Summit posts record high profit

GOKONGWEI-LED JG Summit Holdings Inc. posted a record-high profit of P21.5-billion last year, up by 20 percent from a year ago.

Extraordinary gains from the Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc. deal with Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. compensated for the decline in core earnings.

Gains from the Digital sale amounted to P1.3 billion while profit from operations dipped by 45 percent to P8.06 billion from a year ago, which JG Summit attributed to high input costs, forex movements and capital markets volatility.

JG Summit, in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, said core earnings before taxes—excluding the extraordinary gains from sale of Digital and the effects of foreign exchange and market valuation losses—declined by 9 percent to P16.27 billion in 2011 from a year ago.

Consolidated revenue grew by 17 percent to P122.9 billion from a year ago, as all subsidiaries posted decent revenue growth.

Equity income from associates and joint ventures, however, declined by 29 percent to P6.22 billion due to lower contribution from Singapore-based Global Dairies Industrial Corp. Ltd., which is 26-percent owned by JG Summit.

Universal Robina Corp.'s net profit declined by 13 percent to P4.64 billion for fiscal year ending September from a year ago due to higher input costs. URC was the largest contributor to JGS's net income, accounting for 35 percent in 2011.

Cebu Pacific's net income in 2011 fell by 47 percent to P3.02 billion, as expenses grew faster than revenue due to high aviation fuel costs, passenger volumes, however, expanded by 14 percent.

Robinsons Land Corp. grew its net profit for the fiscal year ending September by 11 percent to P5.07 billion due to the strong performance of all of the company's business units. The residential segment posted the biggest income growth jump in revenues of 41 percent.

Robinsons Bank posted net earnings of P306 million in 2011, up by 23.5 percent year on year, due to higher net interest income and trading gains.

JG Summit Petrochemical Corp. incurred a higher net loss of P384 million in 2011 from P152 million a year ago due to inventory write-offs, higher interest component and rising prices of butane fuel. Doris C. Dumlao

Ill-gotten health

BREAKTIME

Contreras ft. Bonsol 00

DR. NO—it seems that, because I am under medication for heart ailment, too much cholesterol and sugar in my blood, I am playing Russian roulette with my life when I go to the drugstores for my prescription medicines.

From what I gathered, various groups have been pointing out FDA, or Food and Drug Administration (under the Department of Health), to lend up its ability to stop those imported "fake" or "poor quality" medicines from entering the country—and that my stomach.

No doubt, but, because from what I heard, the FDA for the longest time now is literally focused on one and only one thing. That is, running after neighborhood drugstores that sell medicines without prescriptions from real doctors, as against barbecues, for instance.

Under a new law, called the FDA Strengthening Act, the FDA also has the power to regulate imported drugs, for it is stressed the worldwide network known as "counterfeit" and "substandard" drugs.

Which is most important to the guys down here: the need for doctor's prescription when you buy medicine or the quality of the same medicine for which you pay through your nose?

The worldwide problem of fake and poor quality medicines recently took a rather personal twist because of the news that more than 100 patients died in Pakistan by taking medication for heart ailment, and a number of Indian-made cough syrups ill due to the same drugs. They were all given the drugs in government hospitals for free. In other words, the victims were all poor. Those poor people were trying to stay alive by taking medicines for heart ailment, and they died from it, and what a way to die!

Reports said the owners of the three drug companies in Pakistan were arrested.

Quietly, from what I heard, some groups already relayed warnings to the deputies that the administration is beware of the dangers from imported drugs that hardly go through any sort of quality control.

It is said that we are seeing the record shipments of drugs from abroad nowadays, stimulated by the FDA. Our government does not have the means to check on the quality of the imported drug, particularly in the manufacturing sites in the "exporting" countries.

This classic military maxim like me are wont tell whether or not the imported drugs were made in some backyards.

As a matter of fact, the World Health Organization for the past several years has been shouting the problem of counterfeit and substandard drugs in the world, affecting mostly poor countries.

At one time, the WHO estimated that counterfeit or substandard drugs account for more than 10 percent of the world supply of medicines. Since then 25 percent of the medicines sold in poor countries were found to be counterfeit or substandard.

Again, the operative word is "poor." And we have many of them in the countries—the unwilling, in fact.

It was estimated that, in absolute amount, the fake drugs market world-wide reach about $32 billion a year. It is big money, untold wealth to the manufacturers, at the expense of our health and even our lives.

We all know that money talks in many dealings with the government in any country.

According to the WHO, fake and poor quality drugs were prevalent in countries that had weak regulations. I am just not sure if our over-10-m would-be "czars" in the FDA, for example, are weak. It is just that complaints are mounting regarding its helplessness in monitoring the quality of imported drugs.

The hardly subjects them to quality tests, from what I heard, and we hear of the lack of resources. Some groups like pharmaceutical industry and the medical profession) are raising their voices all the way to Malacañang.

The Phil. unlike their peers in other countries, does not even audit the drug companies in the exporting countries first. African countries audit drug manufacturing plants in other countries when they buy from them, such as the cheap medication for AIDS.

And yet the new law—the FDA Strengthening Act—empowers the FDA even to ban products that can harm the public.

In an anniversary celebration of the FDA, our beloved Health Secretary Enrique Ona noted that the same intelligence about the inability of our FDA to monitor the quality of imported drugs also "hurdled against food and drug authorities in other countries.

Ivan, And so what do we do now?

• • •

THE group of Miguel Andrew Tan, who is one of the five richest men in the Philippines, according to Forbes business magazine, is going into tourism and resort.

Andrew Tan is the founder of Megaworld, a real estate giant that about 10 years ago pioneered the BGO property business in the country through The Fort Bonifacio City in Libis, Quezon City, which now hosts some 40,000 BPO jobs.

By the way, there is talk in the stock market that the mysterious group is doing the same concept as in 20-hectare property in Bulacan's City.

It was announced

Korean investors seen expanding presence in PH

By Joey S. Baroa

SOUTH Korean investors are visiting the country late this month to explore business opportunities here, particularly in the infrastructure, agriculture and natural resources sectors.

A South Korean business delegation will attend the Philippines-Korea Partnership Business Partnership Forum, which is being co-sponsored and hosted by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (Kotra), business publication Financial News Inc. and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Philippines.

The forum is aimed at developing mutually beneficial partnerships and further investor needs and connections between the Philippines and South Korea.

In a statement, Kotra-Manila director general and Korean Embassy Trade Commissioner Johnson Choi said that bilateral relations between South Korea and the Philippines had already taken great strides.

Choi said Korea was now the Philippines' fifth-largest trading partners and third largest investor. Also, the Philippines is Korea's third most attractive investment destination in South Asia, she added.

As of end-2011, Philippine exports to Korea reached P3.7 billion, while Philippine imports from Korea amounted to P7.4 billion.

According to Choi, investments made by South Korean companies in the Philippines were mostly in the areas of ship building, power generation, manufacturing, and electronics.

Insurers want capital hike plan junked

By Michelle V. Remo

FILIPINO-OWNED insurance firms want the government to drop the plan to increase the capitalization requirement for insurers to P1 billion by 2016, saying such a move will benefit only multinational companies and put many local firms out of business.

The plan is to raise the capital requirement from P250 million to P900 million next year, P625 million in 2013, P800 million in 2015 and to P1 billion in 2016.

The group said this would create an uneven playing field that would be advantageous to multinational companies.

According to industry estimates, at least 100 life and non-life insurance companies may be forced to shut shop if the proposed capital requirement increase will be implemented.

For the life insurance industry, alone, of the 33 industry member companies, 25 will either lack sufficient capital or will be forced to fold up should given such an increase. The remaining eight life insurers that are likely to meet the proposed requirement are all multinational firms.

"The plan to have a one-size-fits-all capital requirement is something that is viewed by many members to benefit only the foreign players," said an industry source.

The Philippine Life Insurance Association Inc. (PLIA) has asked the Insurance Commission to drop the plan.

In a letter to the Insurance Commission, PLIA urged the government agency to observe an existing circular requiring assessment of stability of insurance firms before imposing higher capital requirements.

More Classifieds
Business Mirror ... B5
Day-At-Calabarzon ... B5
Dept. of Agriculture ... B5
BIDS ... B5
Post/Govt. Affiliations Declaimed ... B5

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DOLE-NCR Building, Intramuros, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with the Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/ Employer	Name of Foreign National/ Citizenship	Position
ORIENTEX CORPORATION Unit 1908 Tower One & Exchange Plaza, Ayala Triangle, Ayala Ave., Makati City	Jeong Bae Kim Korean	General Manager
AART MARKETING SERVICES Rm. 207-208 J.Ok Love Bldg., 68 Quezon Highway, Talipapa, Novaliches, Quezon City	Dubijit Kaur Sandhu Indian	Customer Service Officer
JAPPENG, INC. 10B - 10th Floors, Aurora Tower, Aurora Center, Quezon City	Michael Lee Kwok American	Management Consultant
THE HELLEN COMPANY (PHILIPPINES), INC. Plaridel Bypass Road, Tabang, Guiguinto, Bulacan	Stuart Bruce Jamieson Australian	Managing Director
KEY PNL, INTL. INCORPORATED #715 Quezon Ave. cor. Visayas St., SF Homes, Paranaque City	Wan Jin Lee Korean	Supervisor
ACCENTURE, INC. MPIC Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Shiu Kwai Sin Chinese	Lead IT Analyst
ACCENTURE, INC. MPIC Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Anoop Kalapatthi Mohan Indian	KEAM Procurement Lead
ACCENTURE, INC. 14/F Global One Centre, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Renato Dos Santos Bacalso Brazilian	Senior Manager
WEALTH HOMES, INC. 12/F Ayala Life-FGU Center, 6811 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	James Robert Fraser Donald British	Director
SIDHUBHAKHU ENTERPRISES NO 134 Elizabeth Dr. Nhk Village, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City	Baljeet Kaur Indian	Purchasing Officer
LOHAR MAJRA TRADING CORP. Block 2 Bldg Interiors St., Barrio Obrero, Tondo, Manila	Sukhminder Singh Indian	Purchasing Officer
LOHAR MAJRA TRADING CORP. Block 2 Bldg Interiors St., Barrio Obrero, Tondo, Manila	Gopal Kaur Gill alias Jatinder Kaur Indian	Collection Officer
ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION 3/F Cyber Corporate Center Bldg., Lahug Cebu City, Mandaue Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Hayden Edward Hulme British	Consultant, Project Specialist
DR. KANG ORIENTAL MEDICAL CLINIC PHILS. INC. Unit 1605 Prestige Tower, Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Dae Jin Kang Korean	Operations Manager
TRIPLE ICEBREAKING, INC. 17/F Salcedone Tower, 104 Paseo de Roxas St., Makati City	Mukesh Tara Mishel Philippe Vaschille French	Marketing Specialist
SHUBHAS PRIDHOS LENDING INVESTOR CORP. Unit 4, Campana St. Francisco, Mandaluyong City	Sandeep Singh Sidhu Indian	Collector
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES, INC. 7/F Philamlife Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Chinnakaruppan Peter Chop Chinese	Director
LAKHANAM GEN. MDSE. CORP. No. 4 Mapagsanay Ave. Cielito Pasadena Subd. San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City	Sandeep Kaur Indian	Accommodation Assistant
LAKHANAM GEN. MDSE. CORP. No. 4 Mapagsanay Ave. Cielito Pasadena Subd. San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City	Arjinder Singh Indian	Sales Supervisor
FORTUNE HEALTH CENTER, INC. GF Wellset Tower, #17 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan City	Lingkee Ho Chinese	Consultant
HANGTON MANILA, INC. 2/F 2436/36 Bldg., Pasong Tamo Extension, Bel-Air Village, Makati City	Sarah Lee Korean	Assistant Sales Manager
ARGLE MANAGEMENT SERVICES INC. Rm. 308-A Quezon Cinema, 1126 M. Hizon St., Ermita, Manila	Hussain Saad Abdulkaiem Mohamad Bahraini	Interviewer & Consultant
LAKHANAM GEN. MDSE. CORP. No. 4 Mapagsanay Ave. Cielito Pasadena Subd. San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City	Bhupinder Kaur Indian	Marketing Officer
SAN SOUTHEAST GOLD SERVICES, INC. 2/F Philamlife Tower, 8767 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City	Nana Fumi Yoshi Ishizu Japanese	Social Management Consultant
KOREAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES, INC. (KOREAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PHILIPPINES) Upper Mahogany Road, Mahogany Hill Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Soojeon Song Korean	Teacher
KOREAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES, INC. (KOREAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PHILIPPINES) Upper Mahogany Road, Mahogany Hill Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	So Hyun Kim Korean	Accounting Consultant
KOREAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES, INC. (KOREAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PHILIPPINES) Upper Mahogany Road, Mahogany Hill Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Sangcheol Park Korean	Teacher
KOREAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES, INC. (KOREAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PHILIPPINES) Upper Mahogany Road, Mahogany Hill Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Hajinyung Ko (wife of LIM) Korean	Teacher
KOREAN SCHOOL FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES, INC. (KOREAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL PHILIPPINES) Upper Mahogany Road, Mahogany Hill Town Center, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City	Tae Young Oh Korean	Teacher
SHELL SHARED SERVICES (MBA) B.V. 2nd Floor, Solaris One, 1100 Mac Arthur Hi, Makati City	Wayan Ida Chinese	Associate Expenditure Delivery
DELFI FOODS, INC. 23 dr Trustee St., Parang, Marikina City	Shiki Ikuei Rio Malaysian	Vice President and Treasurer

If you have any information/opposition to the above-mentioned application please communicate with the Regional Director.

(ATTY. ALAN R. MACARAEG)
Regional Director

(PEN - March 15, 2012)

ERRATUM

In the ad instead of Notice of filing of application for Alien Employment Permit publication the February 23, 2012 the correct decision is Mr. Krishna Shyamlal Pradhan should read Krishna Shyamlal Pradhan. SERVICES SOFTWARE DEPOT changed to PROSPERA NATIONAL BANK and not as published.

SECURITY OFFICERS SECURITY GUARDS and LADY GUARDS

Wanted Number Positions: Male 5'7", Female 5'5", 21 years old to 40 years old, College Graduate with at least 2 years Experience, Physically and Mentally Fit, Neat Appearance, Willing to Render Overtime, Willing to Undergo Training

Job Location: Area: Alabang, Ayala Alabang, Filinvest, Muntinlupa, Las Pinas, Paranaque, Makati, Pasay, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Quezon City, Caloocan, Valenzuela, Malabon, Navotas, Marikina, Pasig, Taguig, Pateros, Cainta, Antipolo, Binangonan, Rizal, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Quezon Province

Contact Nos.: 725-1717 loc. 4004, 4005, 4006, 4007, 4008, 4009, 4010, 4011, 4012, 4013, 4014, 4015, 4016, 4017, 4018, 4019, 4020, 4021, 4022, 4023, 4024, 4025, 4026, 4027, 4028, 4029, 4030, 4031, 4032, 4033, 4034, 4035, 4036, 4037, 4038, 4039, 4040, 4041, 4042, 4043, 4044, 4045, 4046, 4047, 4048, 4049, 4050, 4051, 4052, 4053, 4054, 4055, 4056, 4057, 4058, 4059, 4060, 4061, 4062, 4063, 4064, 4065, 4066, 4067, 4068, 4069, 4070, 4071, 4072, 4073, 4074, 4075, 4076, 4077, 4078, 4079, 4080, 4081, 4082, 4083, 4084, 4085, 4086, 4087, 4088, 4089, 4090, 4091, 4092, 4093, 4094, 4095, 4096, 4097, 4098, 4099, 4100, 4101, 4102, 4103, 4104, 4105, 4106, 4107, 4108, 4109, 4110, 4111, 4112, 4113, 4114, 4115, 4116, 4117, 4118, 4119, 4120, 4121, 4122, 4123, 4124, 4125, 4126, 4127, 4128, 4129, 4130, 4131, 4132, 4133, 4134, 4135, 4136, 4137, 4138, 4139, 4140, 4141, 4142, 4143, 4144, 4145, 4146, 4147, 4148, 4149, 4150, 4151, 4152, 4153, 4154, 4155, 4156, 4157, 4158, 4159, 4160, 4161, 4162, 4163, 4164, 4165, 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4498, 4499, 4500, 4501, 4502, 4503, 4504, 4505, 4506, 4507, 4508, 4509, 4510, 4511, 4512, 4513, 4514, 4515, 4516, 4517, 4518, 4519, 4520, 4521, 4522, 4523, 4524, 4525, 4526, 4527, 4528, 4529, 4530, 4531, 4532, 4533, 4534, 4535, 4536, 4537, 4538, 4539, 4540, 4541, 4542, 4543, 4544, 4545, 4546, 4547, 4548, 4549, 4550, 4551, 4552, 4553, 4554, 4555, 4556, 4557, 4558, 4559, 4560, 4561, 4562, 4563, 4564, 4565, 4566, 4567, 4568, 4569, 4570, 4571, 4572, 4573, 4574, 4575, 4576, 4577, 4578, 4579, 4580, 4581, 4582, 4583, 4584, 4585, 4586, 4587, 4588, 4589, 4590, 4591, 4592, 4593, 4594, 4595, 4596, 4597, 4598, 4599, 4600, 4601, 4602, 4603, 4604, 4605, 4606, 4607, 4608, 4609, 4610, 4611, 4612, 4613, 4614, 4615, 4616, 4617, 4618, 4619, 4620, 4621, 4622, 4623, 4624, 4625, 4626, 4627, 4628, 4629, 4630, 4631, 4632, 4633, 4634, 4635, 4636, 4637, 4638, 4639, 4640, 4641, 4642, 4643, 4644, 4645, 4646, 4647, 4648, 4649, 4650, 4651, 4652, 4653, 4654, 4655, 4656, 4657, 4658, 4659, 4660, 4661, 4662, 4663, 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4996, 4997, 4998, 4999, 5000

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
SCHOOLS DIVISION OFFICE – MANILA
Manila Science High School Compound, Don Quijote St., Sta. Mesa Heights, Manila

INVITATION TO BID

The Department of Education – National Capital Region, thru the Schools Division Office of Manila, intends to apply the sum of Php 1,000,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of Bidded Various Supplies. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.

The Department of Education – National Capital Region, thru the Schools Division Office of Manila now invites bids for the Procurement of Bidded Various Supplies.

Item No.	Unit	Item Description	Total ABC (PhP)
1	lot	Supplies, Materials, Printing and Publication Expenses	1,000,000.00

Delivery Period: Within 30 calendar days upon receipt of the Purchase Order

Bidding documents may be purchased from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the bidding documents in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos (Php 5,000.00).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to the Implementing Rules and Regulations for Commonwealth Act 138.

Interested bidders may obtain further information from Department of Education NCR – SDO Manila and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours (8:00 AM – 5:00 PM).

A pre-bid conference shall be held on March 26, 2012 at 10:00 AM at the Conference Room, 1st Floor, SDO Manila Building, Don Quijote St., Sta. Mesa Heights, Manila. Prospective bidders are encouraged to attend the pre-bid conference.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before April 2, 2012 at 10:00 AM. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 18.

Bid opening shall be on April 2, 2012 at 10:00 AM at the Conference Room, 1st Floor, SDO Manila Building, Don Quijote St., Sta. Mesa Heights, Manila. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Department of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject bidders at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to:

ATTY. ANGELINA D. ARCEO
Chairperson, BAC Secretariat
Schools Division Office – Manila
Tel. No. 716-2345
Email: sdo.manila@deped.gov.ph

Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PEN – March 15, 2012)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit IV
Elliptical Road, Diliman
Quezon City

Date Posted: March 15, 2012

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF RUBBER BUDDER SEEDLINGS

The Department of Agriculture (DA), thru the DA-RFU IV-CALABARZON intends to apply the sum of Php 1,000,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Procurement of Budded Rubber Seedlings. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at the opening.

The Department of Agriculture (DA), thru the DA-RFU IV-CALABARZON now invites bids for the Procurement of Budded Rubber Seedlings.

Item No.	Unit	Item Description	ABC (PhP)
1	lot	Procurement of Budded Rubber Seedlings	1,000,000.00

Delivery Period: Within 30 calendar days upon receipt of the Purchase Order

Bidding documents may be purchased from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the bidding documents in the amount of Five Thousand and Two Hundred Fifty Pesos (Php 5,250.00).

The Department of Agriculture (DA), thru the DA-RFU IV-CALABARZON will conduct a pre-bid conference on March 19, 2012 at 10:00 AM at the DA-RFU IV-CALABARZON Conference Room, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City. It will clarify and address any issues raised by prospective bidders.

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before April 2, 2012 at 10:00 AM. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in ITB Clause 18.

Bid opening shall be on April 2, 2012 at 10:00 AM at the Conference Room, 1st Floor, DA-RFU IV-CALABARZON Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject bidders at any time prior to contract award without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

For further information, please refer to:

ATTY. ANGELINA D. ARCEO
Chairperson, BAC Secretariat
Department of Agriculture – RFU IV
Tel. No. 716-2345
Email: sdo.manila@deped.gov.ph

Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PEN – March 15, 2012)

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On the presidential visit to the PSE

ON MARCH 6, 2012, President Aquino visited the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) to celebrate with the stock market community the breaching of the 5,000-point level by the stock market's main index (PSEi).

The President has been apparently maximizing every occasion of the stock market, mentioning in recent days the recent EDSA anniversary celebration to drive home the point that there is a surge of investor confidence in the country under his administration.

The contribution of the current administration to renewing investor confidence cannot be underestimated. Good public governance is high on the agenda of the President and expectations to curb corruption at government are high nowadays.

In the stock exchange, the role of the stock market in economic growth should not be underestimated. The stock market is not only a barometer of the performance of the country but more importantly, a potent venue for capital raising and investment that promotes economic growth, entrepreneurship and job opportunities.

Stock market setbacks

But while it is true that the stock market has been posting record highs in recent months, the stock market is still awaiting for substantial setbacks standing from this administration's lack of interest to positions support for the capital markets.

For example, Congress scuttled to hard to pass the Real Estate Investment Trust Act (REITA) that finally saw the light of day in December 2009.

For years, the Philippines had no share whatsoever to the global REIT industry which, based on an Ernst & Young report, had more than $240 billion worth of investments when the last count was taken in 2009.

The international business community supported much from the new local investment giant. URL described it as "a major leap forward" and a "long-awaited catalyst that could push the Philippine markets and property sector to new highs."

Another global giant, Macquarie, described the new investment product as providing investors "yields that exceed those of traditional investments" which "could act as an important hedge in an inflationary environment."

JP Morgan, an avid supporter of this administration in terms of its push, described it as a point tool that "generates capital for expansion."

However, even as Congress spent years of hard work on this piece of legislation, the executive branch has consistently failed to implement the implementing regulations not found to the law.

For one, zero tax regulations impose a 12 percent VAT on the transfer of assets to the REITs, contrary to long and accepted practice prior to the enactment of the new law.

POINT OF LAW

Francis Lim

Likewise, the Securities and Exchange Commission stated the minimum public ownership (MPO) requirement in as high as 67 percent on the share just as of a REIT company.

Worse, the tax regulations require REIT companies to narrow their tax incentives to assure their compliance with the higher MPO requirement.

As a result, big and landholdings property firms have shelved their plans to list REITs, thereby putting into question the credibility of the Philippines in the international business community. The economy was consequently deprived of an estimated $1.3 billion in new investments that will come in during the first year of the REIT system. Another landmark measure that failed to be fully implemented is the Universal Equity and Retirement Account Act (PERA), which was enacted back in 2008.

Congress authorized the PERA not only to encourage savings but also help develop asset capital markets. It took the executive branch almost three years to issue the last regulations implementing the law; worse, the capital market is still waiting for the separate revenue memorandum defining the guidelines and procedures for reporting PERA transactions to the BIR.

This is not to mention the fact that the government has threatened to impose a higher tax rate for stock market transactions involving shares of stock of listed companies that do not meet the minimum public ownership requirement prescribed by the PSE. Aside from legalities, investors have asked why they should be penalized for the fault of the listed company. Although there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel, there is yet no official resolution of the matter from the BIR; it continues to be a source of December hanging over the heads of the investing public.

A Don Perignon toast?

My two-cents worth: as former PSE President Atty. Hackett, don't just pay lip service to the stock market.

Direct your forerunners to be truly instrumental of the market and, perhaps, your next visit to the stock exchange will be punctuated by a market advance, regardless of the performance of foreign markets.

Better still, Mr. President, with concrete support to the stock market, consider Chris Perignon's stand as pro-ring the opening bell to celebrate the new.

(The author is the former CEO of the PSE and is now Co-Managing Partner of Angara Concepcion Regala & Cruz Law Offices (ACCRALAW). He may be contacted through jslim@accralaw.com.)

Greenergy to invest P680M in China firm

By Amy R. Borres

PUBLICLY Listed Greenergy Holdings Inc. is set to invest 100 million (US$1.6 share 19.68 million to put up a solid venture science and technology incubation company in China.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Greenergy said the incubation company would fund start up companies in economic zones for science and technology, renewable energy and environment-friendly products.

In another development, Greenergy said its board had approved the move made by Tianjin Teda Investment and Development Corp. to assign to its affiliate China Power (Tianjin) New Energy Development Co. Ltd. the various rights of ownership in controlled in by Greenergy and Tianjin last year.

The Greenergy board also granted China Power the authority to sign agreements in relation to the creation of a joint working committee to conduct final due diligence for the planned power projects.

It can be recalled that under the MOA, Greenergy and Tianjin will jointly develop, fund and operate at least P1.3 billion (roughly P65 billion) worth of wind power projects in the Philippines over the next 10 years.

Under the agreement, the two companies would establish a joint venture vehicle to plan the development of the wind energy projects that could generate at least 1,000 MW.

An initial investment of $266 million in the wind energy projects is expected in the next two years.

Greenergy also said in the same disclosure that its board of directors had approved the establishment of a new subsidiary to engage in renewable energy and apply for accreditation with the Department of Energy in compliance with existing rules, and the grant of authority to the company or its subsidiary to enter into agreements with government agencies and local government units in relation to solid waste recycling and biomass generation.

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LIFESTYLE Food

'Tom Yum Goong,' 'Panaeng Nuea,' 'Thod Mun Goong' –a banquet of Thai favorites

SUMET Sompaobsiri, Master in Oriental, Bangkok's Thai master chef

By Fanjo Bugo-Reyes

THAI FOOD is probably the most recognizable Southeast Asian cuisine in the whole world. People all over have developed a gastronomic passion for "Pad Thai," "Tom Yum Goong" and Guinness Sticky Rice with Fresh Mango.

Thai dishes are quite distinctive because

TURN TO PAGE C2

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"PANAENG Nuea," thick and creamy red beef curry with peanut and spices

"BUA LOY," sweet sticky rice flour dumpling in warm coconut milk

"TALAY Phanaeng Pea Hloy," warm mango salad with shrimp and crab

'Tom Yum Goong,' 'Panaeng Nuea'...

From page C1

of their combinations of ingredients. The cuisine are light and easy with the curry paste mainly from fresh ingredients, while the richness comes largely from coconut milk. The use of herbs and spices, plus the simplicity of the cooking process, address the refreshing bite.

This food lovers are in for a gastronomy tour as Mandarin Oriental, Manila, features the exotic flavors of Thailand in "Tastes of Thailand" an ongoing food festival until March 21 at Prego Elite. The foodfest is being held in partnership with Thai International Airways, the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok.

Four Thai chefs, led by famous banquet/entrement from world-acclaimed Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok, have been flown in to whip up traditional and innovative dishes from the land of smiles. The culinary show chefs are Jumlek Meesrimuang, Sompratana Wannapatoopap and Isara Sonwongsa.

Celebrity chef

Jumrus is a celebrity chef and television culinary show host in Bangkok. He's been with Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok, for two decades now. His first visit to the Philippines was in 2008 for a Thai food festival, also at the Mandarin Oriental, Manila.

The 41 year-old culinary artist, founder of Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok's famed Thai restaurant Sala Rim Naam has traveled to Australia, Hawaii, England, Japan, Macau, France, Malaysia and Hong Kong to mention various Thai food promotions and endorsements. He now teaches at Mandarin Oriental's Professional Thai Chef Program.

"I'm so glad to be back for the second time," says Jumrus. "It's nice to showcase our traditional Thai food to this country."

Sensory says only key ingredients for the festival are imported from Thailand, including the bird's-eye chilies, which he uses for tom yum soup, and some curry pastes and fish sauce.

"About 90 percent are already available in Manila," adds Jumrus. Shallots, ginger, garlic and coconut cream, among others ingredients, are bought in town. However, the chefs make their own chili paste, chili sauce and other dressings.

Using the freshest seafood, spices, tropical fruits and root aromatics (lemongrass, kaffir lime, galangal, turmeric), the chefs will whip up delectable dishes from the land of smiles.

"TASTES of Thailand" features the freshest seafood, tempting spices, tropical fruits and rice dishes to...

GUEST Thai chefs Jumrus Meesrimuang, Sompratana Wannapatoopap, Samut Sompatthanapanee and Isaraa Sonwongsa

PASSO Unos kaffe: spread of spicy and savory Thai specialties

"PLA RAAD Prig Dawg," fried fish with red chili sauce, green pepper corn and vegetables

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Guy" (herbed whipped heart salad with chicken), "Thod Man Goong" (deep-fried prawn patties with sweet plum sauce), "Panaeng Nuea" (thick and creamy red beef curry with peanut and herbs), "Gai Phad Med Himmaphan" (stir-fried chicken with cashew nuts) and "Yum Hoi Shell Prig Thai Dum" (stir-fried scallop with black pepper sauce).

The curry, rice or seafood soup combines tangy, sour and chili flavors, while nuts and spices elevate the curry dishes.

Jumrus says it would be impossible to harness the entire Thai favorites in a day, so two menu cycles will be available for the duration of the festival. Each cycle features at least 10 dishes for lunch and dinner.

Don't miss the "Yum Thua Plu Gai" (herbed whipped heart salad with chicken), "Thod Man Goong" (deep-fried prawn patties with sweet plum sauce), "Panaeng Nuea" (thick and creamy red beef curry with peanut and herbs), "Gai Phad Med Himmaphan" (stir-fried chicken with cashew nuts) and "Yum Hoi Shell" (stir-fried scallop with black pepper sauce).

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Finish your hearty meal with the classic "Khao Niew Ma Muang" (coconut sticky rice with mango), "Lod Chong Thai" (chilled flour threads with coconut syrup and crushed ice), "Chan Charuan" (caramelized banana with coconut cream), "Sakoo Piak Gub Kluay Nuad" (sweetened tapioca pearl and corn kernel pudding topped with coconut cream), "Bua Loy" (warm sticky rice flour dumpling in watery coconut milk), "Bib Tim Krob" (water chestnut cubes in chilled coconut syrup), and "Khanom Fug Thong" (steamed pumpkin cake topped with shredded coconut meat).

Eat, wie and learn

For those who wish to bring the tastes of Thailand home with them, chef Jumrus will conduct a cooking class on March 17, 9 a.m. He will set-to-share recipes to the intricacies of preparing authentic Thai food, including "Yum Mamuang Nua Sow" (Spicy Mango Salad with Soft Shell Crab), "Phad Thai Goong" (Stir-fried Thai-style Noodles with Prawns, Bean sprouts and Chives) and "Gluay Chuwan" (Caramelized Banana with Coconut Cream).

The class fee is inclusive of breakfast and a three-course lunch, where students can sample the dishes that have been demonstrated.

The food festival is also giving diners a chance to win a holiday trip for two to Bangkok, inclusive of accommodations at the legendary hotel. Winners will get to immerse themselves in Thai culture and food with a host-duty. Diner couple stay at Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok, courtesy of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Call Pam Lim at tel. (5)6000 ext. 2411 or e-mail mornel_pamlim@mnlq.com

Adapting Pad Thai for Philippine palate

D.I.Y.

ANDTHE CHEFANGELS

What makes this easy is the use of bottled pad Thai paste for stir-frying the noodles

PDI LIFESTYLE KITCHEN-TESTED RECIPE

I REALLY ADMIRE the Thais for their dedication in promoting tourism to their country. Lately, the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) has been whipping up an activity almost every month to promote various aspects of Thai trade and tourism.

Last February, at a trade show held in Bum Thani Hotel, 22 provinces were represented. Thai products and tour packages designed to remind the audience of the beauty and allure of Thailand. Among those present were the Thai Ambassador himself, Prasa Prasavinichai, and country manager for Thai Airways Sect. Chupkitchai, as well as Luce de Jesus, Philippine marketing manager for TAT.

Similarly, the Thailand Trade Exhibition held early this month at the SMX Convention Center was a showcase of Thai products and services. This show, however, the products, ranging from silk to jewelry to glassware, were for sale, and at very reasonable prices, too. I came home with shopping bags full of assorted goods, including some dips and sauces.

Aside speaking of sauces, is

Turn to page C4

was in one of the booths selling Thai delicacies that I learned how to make pad Thai the easy way. What makes it easy is the use of bottled pad Thai paste for stir-frying the noodles.

I used to make the sauce from scratch, i.e., from fresh tamarind, which I would boil and press to make my own tamarind sauce. But in the trade exhibition, I learned that bottled pad Thai paste is just as good for cooking this very popular supermarket fare.

Here's the recipe, which I've recreated after watching the cooking demonstration. Bottled pad Thai paste, such as the one used in the cooking demonstration with the brand name Rarednoon, is available in the condiments section of supermarkets.

Easy Pad Thai recipe

½ cooking oil
3 eggs
1 block tofu, cut into thin strips
200 g rice noodles, soaked in water for 20 minutes
1 c bottled pad Thai paste, such as Rarednoon brand
½ c water
1 small carrot, cut into thin strips
½ k small shrimps, peeled
Several strands of bean sprouts, trimmed
½ c chopped spring onions
½ c ground peanuts
2 tbsp white sugar
Sliced lemon

Heat 2 tablespoons of the cooking oil in a wok or frying pan and cook the eggs, scrambled-style. Remove eggs from the pan and cut into strips. Set aside.

Add the remaining two tablespoons cooking oil to the same wok or pan and fry the tofu strips until brown and crisp. Remove from pan and set aside. Spoon the excess oil from the pan.

In a bowl, mix together pad Thai paste and water. Pour into the pan. Drain noodles from the water and add to the pan. Pad Thai paste in the pan. Add carrot strips, shrimps and bean sprouts. Stir-fry until noodles and bean sprouts are tender and shrimps are fully cooked, around five minutes. Transfer to a serving platter and top with the cooked scrambled eggs and tofu. Garnish with spring onions.

Combine peanuts and sugar and sprinkle on top of the noodles before serving. If desired, serve with lemon slices or lime (if available).

For more tips, recipes and stories, visit author's blog: www.notmuchknown.com and Facebook fan page: www.facebook.com/notmuchknown. Follow on Twitter @NotmuchKnown.

Trotter terrine, green-tomato gazpacho, sea-urchin risotto—in a remote part of Bohol

SEA URCHIN risotto

MY SUMMER vacation began early. And I was surprised that on a Sunday when I left...so many at the airport were leaving as well for their destinations.

Mine was Bohol, a place visited three times before; each time, served me/were excellent food, however, was good only that first visit. At the now closed resort, the cook introduced me to Bohol cooking such as bolinao (crisp) of cat fish with pinakurat, and my host brought me to the market where the specialties were sauted...chicharon and kilaw—and then for some barbecue at the open-air grill are called "Sky's the Limit."

Alfonsa or Nor to her family's daughter of owner Freddie Carmona. She has worked in restaurants abroad, a daily back-breaking grind of two jobs; she said. Joshua has apprenticed with renowned chefs like Mark Bailey and Cyrille Lamour. They have chosen to work in their more isolated place. They're too young to be retiring, but what seems attractive to both is that they can fix their own menu, and they love to work with local products.

Freddie's wife Baris and there are very few imported ingredients used like olive oil, wine, US steaks and Malagos cheese from Davao, which Kate studies. Most of the ingredients are sourced in Bohol whether from the farms or from purveyors such as the shellfish farms near

FISH kinilaw

by. Even the breads are made in house by Joshua.

In the few meals we had during our stay, we were have gone through the whole menu. It had an international array of dishes. There was Filipino kinilaw and sinabaya in gata, Italian pastas and risotto, French terrine and chicken liver pate. That curry ex. coconut rice, bouillabaisse gravlax using flying fish.

Flavorful

But the proof is in the cooking. Imagine still getting the crunch of pork skin in the tiniest terrine. And how flavorful and still moist the vegetable couscous was. We were glad for the gulli-doodeng relish, mainly because they used mostly local veggies like banana tops and eggplants strips fried to a crisp, corn and singkamas. The dressings ranged from Sagong vinaigrette to Caesar.

Alfonsa and Joshua pointed out that the dishes are their interpretation of the classics, whether bread pudding, cannolet or bouillabaisse. The green-tomato gazpacho was cool because of its morning temperature and its perfect balance of sweet, sour, salt and spice.

The duo accommodated a request in do a sea-urchin risotto using the local creamy roe/s gathered by the fisherfolk just minutes before.

Thankfully the resort provided us with carrying facilities, a beach and swimming pool where we swam or merely walked in both the waters of the white sand beach and the pool big enough to do laps.

It is quite rare that a resort like Amun-Ini has both good food and first-class amenities. But then Freddie was manager of another high-end Bohol resort before he opened his own, and was also part of a restaurant and convenience food outlets in Metro Manila.

Comfortable rooms

Easily-cooked food and restaurant management in Amun-Ini, don't so this reason are more than comfortable; they also have one local artists in the décor of curtains, being Bohol Sun in ours styles, baskets, lacquered tabletop made from peanut shells. Building rooms are made of wood in the highly-tapered, but natural cooling. And the bathroom is as big as the sleeping area, and the shower area can accommodate three of you and not feel cramped.

It can be enough to just relax within the resort, which has a view of Lamgam Island to Mindanao right across on a clear day. But there are many to see in Anda. Go to the Quinale beach downtown where the sand can steal that of Boracay—powdery fine and high in silica, according to Mayor Angeline Rimando. She had it analyzed, she said, but will make sure no one will mine the sand.

Visit Lamanok island volcano-pride Mang Florentino can bring you to caves, then swam you a story of shamans and mermaids. But be sure your legs are sturdy enough, and sway footwear good enough for climbing steep, slippery and pointy corals. Or else to the clear blue waters all around this island.

The only bad mark to my great vacation was that Bohol airport, where it was standing room only at the departure waiting area. How can we accommodate the millions we want to visit to Iloilo as the way they are?

Call Amun-Ini Resort: 0917 305 3998; www.amun-ini.com

E-mail: pinoyfood84@yahoo.com.

My new favorite restaurant and dining experience

MANY OF my readers will call me "fish or bulin," but I just have to share this experience. Ive over four years now. One and Mina have been inviting us to try their favorite restaurant—Antonio's in Tagaytay. It was only a few weeks ago that we finally got to, and what an evening it turned out to be!

There are two places in the world where I experienced my most memorable and wonderful meals. One was lunch in a beauty garden restaurant in France in the dundest of sofas overlooking the town of Bordeaux. I came across the place when I was driving from Paris to Barcelona and was on the lookout for Michelin-rated restaurant.

The other was at my favorite fine-dining Paris restaurant, Chez Lamarre. Both places have sophisticated interior design, perfect table setting, outstanding service, excellent ambiance and super delicious food. Even if they served me galanggang chaser, the experience would still be worth it.

On a recent Saturday, those two experiences were joined by a third one. Our reservation was set at 5:30. We arrived to a gated property and parked. As we walked into the huge restaurant, the place reminded me of a 1930s "The Great Gatsby"-like setting.

There were black-and-white photos of the owners' family. Service staff were dressed like those in the Lamarre, in personal white-clad ing, and they were attentive and polite. We were escorted to our table that was right in front of a quaint, well-manicured garden of assorted fresh-looking trees and plants, many of which I had not seen before and not indigenous to the Philippines.

The Tagaytay weather was perfect. There was rain-drizzle with a light breeze that was damp and cool. We had cocktails on a deck overlooking a garden, and, soon, a sunset that left us breathless.

The table setting was impeccable. Cutlery and glassware were quite elegant, and we were to have dinner with two of our good friends—both food-ies, too. When our table was not only very well presented, the taste was also impeccable. Everything from spiced desserts the dessert was such an expression.

This place clearly pays unconscious all the fine details of service. And the dishes were a testament to the chef's passion, experience and skill. I was so impressed.

We stayed until late evening and drove back to Tala. I talked about this place for weeks, and whenever I did, the most common reaction among my friends is, "You just cried it now?!" I am told many establishments have been done to the place, and it has become even more today.

So I join One and Mina in declaring that this is my new favorite restaurant and dining experience. For those of us who are "bulin" in Manila," I urge you to do a hacienda's in Tagaytay (include it in your bucket list. You have to dine in this paradise before moving on the other one. Go around 4 p.m. or even lunch.

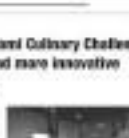
Call (02)8-8993000 for reservations; cannot very highly recommended.

Happy eating!

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

Ajinomoto 3rd Umami Culinary Challenge gets bigger and more innovative



Summer fun doesn't end with the sun at the Midnight Madness Sale in Glorietta

Ayala Malls, the premier shopping and dining destination brings you the Midnight Madness Sale at Glorietta. This March, Glorietta in partnership with Metrobank Card Corporation starts the summer with discounts and rewards for shoppers.

Shoppers get special rewards during the Midnight Madness Sale with Metrobank Triple Rewards. Customers get a free Glorietta 4 cinema pass and 3x Rewards Points when they use their Metrobank Card for a minimum single receipt purchase of P2,500 from March 15 to 18.

Summer Trip Treats await shoppers in Glorietta offers up to 50% discount in summer travel packages for 2012. This exciting vacation treat will include airfare and hotel accommodations to destinations such as Hongkong, Bangkok and Palawan. Customers can visit the booth located at the ground floor, Glorietta 4 fronting Marks & Spencer and Florsheim to avail of this exclusive treat.

Somedaydream brings summer tunes to Glorietta. He started off as an internet sensation but by the time his first single "Hey Daydreamer" went on radio, there was no stopping Raz Tolledo also known as Somedaydream from winning the hearts of a bigger audience. Catch Somedaydream on March 18, 7 PM at the Glorietta 5 Atrium.

Enjoying a night at the movies with friends and family will be made more fun with this special movie offer: Buy three cinema tickets and get one for free on the last two screenings at Glorietta 4. Glorietta's great deals do not end here as your parking is also on us. For a minimum single receipt worth P1,000 you can get free parking for four hours.

Delightful deals bounce your way at the Midnight Madness Sale on March 15 to 18, 2012. Mall hours for the Midnight Madness Sale: March 15 to 17 Up to 12 midnight and March 15 and 18: Up to 9pm.

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Glorietta Live! brings Somedaydream on March 18, 7 PM at Glorietta 5 Atrium

Summer fun doesn't end with the sun!

Delightful deals bounce your way this Midnight Madness Sale on March 15 - 18.

Glorietta Live!
Listen to the summer tunes of Somesday Dream on March 18 at the Glorietta 5 Atrium.

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LIFESTYLE Food

Back-to-back ice cream champ

Whether making traditional European ice cream or concocting flavors with Oriental 'simplicity' for the Diamond Hotel, pastry chef Daniel Back says he always goes for the best produce. Next concoction: 'Queso de bola'

JUST 40 DAYS I figured out how to operate the summer heat, it started to rain. On the brighter side, we met our resident chef Daniel Back's ice cream parade!

I recently had a coffee-and-dessert get-together at the Capitol's luxurious haunt of the Diamond Hotel, a personal favorite even back when it was the Holleran Restaurant. It is where the view of glorious Manila bay is vibrant.

I was pleased to meet the hotel's new pastry chef who started his career at the Windmills Restaurant in Mayfair, London. He then became pastry chef of Jean Georges Vongerichten, a three-star Michelin place, the highest ranking in London.

He further honed his skills in William Curley Patisserie and Chocolaterie. While working

BACK TO BACK D2

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your creative ideas will be appreciated by others today. You work hard to get what you want, and you generally succeed. Your love life is also quite satisfying. Tonight, you may enjoy a romantic evening with that special person. It's important to define your goals. You have a lot to offer, but you must learn to express yourself clearly. Don't let the feelings of others overwhelm you. Today is significant as a fresh cycle begins (2012).

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Keep an eye on your bank account and checking pen; share with others. Things will come to today, and the unexpected can happen. Be inspired ahead! Don't!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Partners and close friends are extraordinarily active today. Just accept this and get ready for anything. Someone might demand more independence or freedom in the relationship.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Canceled meetings, unexpected visitors, staff shortages and the girls will pay for the mistakes you've made. Your calm response will lead to more than a month-ended.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Favors — be more cautious than usual today. Not everyone is as generous as you are. Don't let someone else's problems or financial difficulties overwhelm you. Remember, small significant breakdowns or minor accidents could occur (March).

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Something surprising or unexpected might take place at home today. In addition, small significant breakdowns or minor accidents could occur (March).

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) There is an accident-prone day for you, so be careful. Slow down and take it easy. Think before you speak or act.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Keep an eye on your money and your cash flow today. You misplaced money, you misplaced something or you misplaced your keys. Don't let them. Keep organized and will not to some of you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You feel restless and rebellious today. By today's standards, small gestures mean a lot to others. Be careful not to overdo it. Don't let someone else's problems overwhelm you today. Remember, small gestures mean a lot to others.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Either romantic encounters could be today, and they might be about your friendship that takes place between you and someone special inside. Make your move, and you will be pleased with the results. Don't let someone else's problems overwhelm you today. Remember, small gestures mean a lot to others.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Someone you know might be in the spotlight today. Be careful not to overdo it. Don't let someone else's problems overwhelm you today. Remember, small gestures mean a lot to others.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that each row, column, and every 3×3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. For more programs or www.sudoku.com

Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★★

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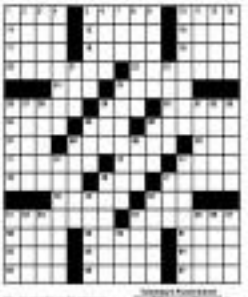

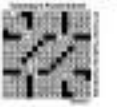

Hip happening ramen

Nomama is not your mother's usual cooking. It's chef Him's version of fusion that never fails to surprise

MENU

Margaux Salcedo

SEAFOOD Ebiten a la Japonaise

TUNA Spring Rolls with spicy ponzu and arugula

IT SOUNDS like Harajuku hip-hop, I thought, wondering how this restaurant came up with its name, "Nomama."

Located on Scout Tuazon just off Tomas Morato in Quezon City, the restaurant gives off a very laid vibe—very young, current, in its very own universe.

Retail, metal, cement all give off the feel of an artist's loft. It breathes an austere setting that allows you to be comfortable even if you're eating alone, with the company of only your iPad or the latest John Grisham novel.

It's not the kind of Japanese restaurant either that shouts Japanese—no Japanese magazines, no flag with Japanese character hanging outside the door, no rows of shochu, no sushi counter with people "hi-ya"-ing you.

It's a place that knows no nationality, has no pretensions—just an artist's workshop.

Food artisan

The artist is chef Him Uy de Baron and he takes his craft seriously. I get why the word "artisanal" is simplified. It's because every plate framed out is a work of art boasting fine, sit, avant-elements.

And the chef's influences are not just Japanese—I guess the guy just hops pens to like anyone. If anyone could circle in he doing Japanese bistro right in this country it's (chef) Him!

Take the ramen spring roll. The freezing roll should attach its name to this dish...as irresistibly close!

Into sushi with tuna sashimi, then wraps each piece with a very thin rice paper. Fry added texture he inserts alfalfa sprouts.

But it doesn't end there.

Dipping roll each roll in a chilled red sauce for that wake-me-up bite. Then additionally, on the plate, he scatters arugula leaves and edamame seeds, like landing on a plain skies.

To contrast the bitterness of the arugula, he also scatters small dices of mango. And finally, for the oh-so-Asian angle, he glides on the plate as purposeful design a tin of chili sauce.

Now remember, this is interactive art. You, the audience, are supposed to put it all together for that eye-opening bite of tuna plus mango elements. Is there a lot going on? Obviously.

Is it confused? Not at all. It is fusion that is fused. If this was fashion, it would be Pantone Field at her best.

Other that Japanese Nomama is inspired dish, another one that hits the spot is the Japanese Pinoy starter offerings. It is presented as part of a salad, alongside cherry tomatoes. Very fresh, very pretty.

Here also has a Japanese-American dish—the beef tataki with chips, which resembles more a steak tartare than a tataki. It is spicy, biting and pricks you with its flavors.

Fusion ramen

Even the ramen is house-tied. Interestingly, it is not the namesake ramen, the Nomama Ramen, that stands out.

Fresh he said, while it tastes decent, it is not what stands out in the chef's list of ramens. Ramen addicts are quick to judge. "Obsessive ramen."

But it seems the chef realizes this. "I have no secret to make this place like her noodle house or make it comparable to customers in Japan because that's just impossible," said chef Him Uy de Baron, who personally goes around inspecting tables during meal hours.

He was in Japan when the epiphany for Nomama hit him. "I was just appreciating Tsukiji when it hit me that I want to open something back home that would remind me of that experience." Hence the name "Nomama," which is Him-speak for "Her new Mamma's cooking."

Come without expectations because you are not about to have a dish that you are already familiar with...you are here to appreciate something that this fusion has created. An experience of his experiences, in a thinking, his heart.

As with all...some creations are not quite there yet. Like the chicken wings ramen which makes you scratch that chicken wings are best stewed and not noodled.

But the ramen that takes inspiration from Thailand is fantastic. It is called Thai Green Curry Ramen, is truly of love the heat of fresh noodles. The limits is coconut-based and has the Thai-inspired flavors of lemongrass and coriander. It is a unique dish that could very well become the signature dish of the restaurant.

I first reviewed Chef Him Uy de Baron when he was running Just Cafe of Business Town back there he was already espousing Asian bistro. It's great to see that he's found a great new home and that his art is back for the world to eat!

Nomama Artisanal Ramen is at 1/F Fill Bldg 2, Scout Tuazon and Scout Castor, QC. (02) 1 Mirrors, serves the old Ideas Fried Chicken). Reservations required. Open for lunch and dinner. Major credit cards accepted. Wheelchair accessible. Limited parking. Visit facebook.com/nomamaramen.

The author is at facebook.com/margaxsalcedo and twitter.com/margaxsalcedo

Back-to-back ice cream champ

From page D1

there he was voted as Best British Chocolatier/Artist.

He also was pastry chef at Soho Berkeley Restaurant in London. He trained the staff for Hong Kong when Nobu opened there. Back was also part of the opening team of Nobu Dubai.

After travelling the world, Daniel Back found himself a new home at the Manila Diamond Hotel.

Since he arrived, Back has raised the hotel dining standards for all things sweet. His specialties include desserts, pastries and, of course, homemade ice cream.

When I tried his black sesame swirl and his green tea, I was deeply impressed.

This is what superior ice cream tastes like—very creamy, super smooth, silky, to-die-for...literally sublime!

They have 30 flavors: Black Sesame, Mont Blanc (Chestnut and Rum), Azuki Bean, Melon, Guanabana (Green Sop), Apple Pie, Gorgonzola Vanilla and Bleu Sugar, Sake and Jackfruit, Super Moist Chocolate, and Salted Cheesecake. But when I visited, only four were available.

The Azuki Red Bean was very good, too—so was the Super Moist Chocolate.

Said chef Back, "Our premium Mexican vanilla and Belgian chocolate are the only imported ingredients we use. Everything else is fresh natural produce. We also recommend a free flavor until a Japanese simplicity, hence the Gorgonzola (Roquefort Blue and Cream Brie) and the popular Black Sesame."

"Our ice cream is in the European style," added Back. "Most of our ice creams are cream and/or eggless so the base. This makes it creamier and richer but long in the mouth."

Tip

I asked the chef to share his knowledge on perfecting the art of ice cream, making. "Probably the best tip I can offer is to buy the best produce to flavor your ice cream, be it fruit, chocolate or cream cheese."

"You should always get the best ingredients for your ice cream, as this will shine through in the finished product," he explained. "The milk should be full fat and whipping cream when possible. Also double the 'body' of the ice cream. The egg yolks give the ice cream a richer feel.

"When making your ice cream, it is important to cook your cream anglaise to 82 degrees (while stirring with a spatula to prevent it sticking to the bottom of the pan), as this will coagulate the yolks and make it safe for consumption.

"When the temperature has been reached, you have to pour it into an ice bath to cool very quickly, otherwise you risk curdling the eggs. This will result in a grainy product."

On ice cream machines: "We use a Cuisinart ice cream machine. I think most home ice cream makers are of good quality. Just remember not to overfill them as the churning power reduces dramatically."

Speaking of his ice cream: "The ice cream we are most proud of are Black Sesame because it's different from everything else. The coconut vanilla and palm sugar are, because it's only 6 percent sugar, so people switching their sugar intake can enjoy, and Taro and Jackfruit, because we use the beautiful natural fruit purees here to do Philippines."

Next flavor to plan to experiment with?

"Queso de Bola. I think Filipinos will like that."

The most unique flavor you've ever conceived?

"Banana and Caramel ice cream is classic with tobacco using cigars from Cuba. It had a beautiful flavor, the banana and caramel working naturally together and the tobacco providing a kick on the back of the throat. No one could guess what the unique flavor was!"

Vanilla recipe

Chef Back shares a simple vanilla ice cream recipe for you to try at home. But really, why not give just them a call!

1000 g whole milk
500 g whipping cream
250 g egg yolks
100 g refined sugar
110 g liquid glucose
2-4 vanilla pods or vanilla essence

Heat your milk, cream and liquid glucose in a pan.

Whisk your egg yolks and refined sugar together.

When the liquid is boiling, slowly add to the yolk sugar mix while whisking briskly to prevent the eggs from curdling.

Place back in the pan and cook the anglaise to 82 degrees using a spatula or wooden spoon.

When the temperature is reached, strain through a mesh into an ice bath to cool quickly.

Rest the mix overnight then churn it in your ice cream machine.

Place in the freezer.

Chef Daniel's ice creams are part of summer 2012's treat try list.

Call the Diamond Hotel, tel. 5263000 loc. 1110. The Cafe Shop at Resorts-High Street, mobile 0917-7000450, or The Cafe Club Rockwell, tel. 5908127, in order and reserve the ones available in pint and half gallon size.

My book, "Kitchen Encore 2: The Directors—My Lifetime in Dining, Cooking and Living," is now available at all leading bookstores, call 6476744.

E-mail the author at inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

Healthy Lenten offerings

DINING OUT

FOR LUNCH, Alaska offers a meatless feast, such as Backs' Cajun Shrimp Kabobs, skewers of grilled shrimp and potato kabobs slapped with Cajun butter marinade and served with Alaska' own spicy remoulade dipping sauce, at only P429, and Black Garlic Sesame Pasta, a bowl of spaghetti doctored with garlic olive oil and toasted flecks sautéed in a chili-infused garlic-olive oil mixture, for P288.

To celebrate graduation month, Cielo is offering a 10-percent discount for all graduates until April 30, at minimum P1,000 food and beverage purchase entitles all graduates to a discount on their entire bill, upon presentation of a valid school ID. *Cielo is in at Greenbelt 5, Makati. Tel. 7263622. Greenhills, San Juan, 5712868. Tomas Morato, Quezon City, 3720871. And UP! is in at Hotel Plaza Alabang, tel. 8096927.*

Sugarloaf

Sugarloaf offers a variety of no-meat menus for Lent.

Dishes include salmon or tilapia nacho sandwich with tomato-avocado salsa and organic lettuce, smoked fish, and cold-stock and mango Greeky fatty with probiotic dressing. Two-range egg-mayo sandwich on wheat bagel.

Vegetarian options include soups of the day made from farm-fresh certified organic produce, tomato-basil bruschetta with pesto topped with fresh mango, and all-veggie wraps and sandwiches.

Sugarloaf is at 5/F and 3/F of Mall-and-Lifestyle Center, 37 Paseo de Roxas corner Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Greenbelt 3, Makati City. Tel. 8869581; and 6/F Ayala Center Bldg., 226 Ayala Ave., Makati. Reservations, tel. 8816826 or 0917-6314257.

Cravings

Cravings presents its Lenten dishes until April 7. Enjoy Spinach Dimsum with Asian-Style Tomato Sauce (P250), Cravings' Asian Tofu Salad with Sweet Soy Glaze (P220), Fish and Chips (P350), and Grilled Steak with Asian Slaw and Teriyaki Glaze (P250).

Cravings' Golden Peppers will be offered in all of Cravings restaurants.

Cravings is at Ketchuran, GC, tel. 4266888; 4/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, 6356572; Forum Pavilion, Makati, 8704577; Forbes Mall, GC, 4598736; Festival Super Mall, Alabang, 8584457; and Eastwood Mall, Libis, 4763698.

C2's seafood specials

C2 Classic Cuisine features Lenten specials, including Bulungbung (a Kapampangan dish of squash flowers, okra cooked with dried fish or shrimp), Sinmubang Cebu (creamy coconut milk with squash, string beans, round eggplants and okra), Chicharong Bituqgan (young bangus and malunggay stew topped with crunchy chicharon), and Seafood Inasal (a combo of stewed squid, boneless milkfish and shrimps, served hot on a sizzling plate).

C2's Lenten selections are offered in all C2 Classic Cuisine restaurants until April 7. *Visit branches at Katipunan Avenue, Quezon City, tel. 4266881; Mid-town Wing, Robinsons Place, Manila, 5657442; The Ledge at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, 6387456; Greenbelt 3, Greenbelt 5, 7725347; and Ayala Center Megamall, 4707132.*

Tempura at Traders

Indulge in unending mixed tempura platter for lunch and dinner at Traders Hotel, Manila's Kinabe Japanese restaurant and sake bar until April 30.

Enjoy plate after plate of delectable prawns, freshly caught fish and seasonal vegetables lightly battered and deep-fried, and served with hot favorite Ten Tsuyu dipping sauce.

The platter comes with Miso soup, choice of assorted bowls of plain or garlic fried rice and endless cold or hot Shigetsu roasted barley tea.

All-you-can Sunday-Friday for lunch and dinner, and Saturday for dinner. *Call 5084888.*

KOMRAB NAG OFFERINGS Komrad Mark Nuñez and Chinese Kitchen offers Cumin Pork Ribs, Braised Pork Belly with preserved vegetables. It is at 2/F Venezia, Eastwood Mall, Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City. Tel. 9111666.

CHEESE PLATTER AT DINELLI Dinelli Gourmet e-Bottega Circle, Forbes Town Center. The Fort, offers cheese platter, consisting of five Dutch cheeses from Westland, Holland, with a glass of Baringer chardonnay. Honey, grapes and raspberry dip complete the cheese box. Call Dinelli Gourmet at 4556619 or 4553344 for reservations.

Deliciously citrus-y–kiwi pork with coconut cream sauce, roasted chicken breast with kiwi salsa

By Irene C. Perez

KIWI Pork with Coconut Cream

IF YOU ARE one saucy citrus-y dishes, try cooking with kiwi. The juicy fruit actually accentuated with desserts, salads and juices can add an interesting zing to your dishes.

Beat the Heat: Pork with Coconut Cream Sauce, Roasted Chicken Breast with Kiwi Salsa, and Marinated Fresh Salmon and Scallops with Kiwi Tar sound to you?

These are just some of the savory recipes formulated by Zespri, which supplier kiwi fruits from New Zealand. Steve Hampton, regional market development manager for Southeast Asia remembered the Zespri variety available locally is red and brown.

Zespri Green is the traditional kiwi we know—soft, sweet-sour and with "fuzzy" skin. It forms a tough lining on the fruit, which, Hampton said, regular kiwi eaters get used to—firmly count this an "acquired taste."

Then there's Zespri Gold—yellow fruit which is much sweeter than the green ones. It has smooth skin, black seeds and yellow meat like that of a mango. Kids prefer the Gold Zespri variety. Both kinds contain more the amount of vitamin C of an orange, vitamin E, potassium, folic acid, plus antioxidants like polyphenols and carotenoids, which are said to prevent healthy cells and boost immunity.

"Kiwi can also aid digestion because it has fibers and an enzyme called actinidin that digests protein, making it a healthy snack," Hampton said in an interview at Cerventes Tapas Bar in Greenbelt 5, Makati.

Cooking with kiwi

Zespri Kiwis, Hampton explained, are grown in Mount Maunganui, New Zealand. It originated from China where it was known as yang tao or Chinese gooseberry, before seeds made their way to New Zealand where it was renamed "kiwi" after the country's national bird. It is also known as the "kiwifruit." Zespri kiwi is available in Asia, Europe and the US.

Marketing consultant Dottie Bituin-Lopez gave some tips on how to choose good kiwi:

- The Gold Kiwi is ripe upon picking. Hold it between your fingers and check for firmness. It should yield to a soft squeeze, but shouldn't be too soft.
- Hard kiwis are unripe and should be stored for a few days to ripen.
- Kiwis will keep for 3-5 days in room temperature, or 4-7 days in the fridge.

Kiwi Pork with Coconut Cream Sauce

½ kg cubed pork (kaldereta cut)
1 tsp finely chopped lemongrass
400 g pork fillet or 4 pork medallions
1 tbsp oil
1 tbsp Thai curry paste (red or green)
1 (165-ml can coconut cream
2-3 Zespri Green kiwi, peeled and sliced
Cooked rice

Pat the cubed pork dry and season with salt and pepper to taste.

In a heavy-bottomed pan, add the oil and sear the pork on both sides. Turn the heat down and continue cooking pork until done. Remove from the pan and keep aside.

Add the Thai curry paste to the same pan. Sizzle to release fragrant aromas. Stir in the coconut cream, adding a splash of water if it's too thick. Return the pork to the pan and simmer for a few minutes.

Place the pork on top of freshly cooked rice. Add kiwi slices and pour the sauce. Serves four.

Visit www.zespri.com/recipes

Fun cooking workshops for kids

LOOKING FOR activity for kids this summer? Why not take this time for them to learn cooking and baking that will surely benefit them in the future?

Kitchen Hobbies Cooking Center offers basic Cooking Workshop and Basic Baking for Teens for children 10 years old and above.

For the Basic Cooking Workshop, students will be introduced to kitchen sanitation and safety, different kitchen utensils and equipment, food preparation, food ingredients, seasonings, herbs and spices. They will be taught the proper way of measuring ingredients, knife skills, plus plating techniques. Filipino, Chinese and Western dishes including basic recipes have been lined up for the students to learn in the five-day module.

For the Basic Baking for Teens, students will learn the proper way of measuring ingredients, baking utensils and equipment, and cookeeping of the baked products. Chocolate Chip Cookies, Lemon Squares, Banana Walnut Loaf, Carrot Cake are just some of the recipes included in the 12 baked goodies to be made.

Kitchen Hobbies Cooking Center is at 28 M. Cuenco corner Mapua St., QC. First batch will start on March 21. For Down in the south side of Metro Manila, workshops are held in Muntilla, Paranaque. Call 7768572 or 7425607, visit www.kitchenhobbies.com.

ENTERTAINMENT

Julie Ann-ie G. Velarde

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Unstoppable Ms De Rossi

"Legacy" star Alessandra de Rossi on Tom: "Ahhhh. Ayoko nang mag-taping. Eyes, pakisunode nga si Lucas Sotto! Isa pang singing double ko today. Thanks!"

HEARD

RHIAN Ramos

Rhian Ramos: Work is therapy

But she hasn't given up on love

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

UNSURPRISINGLY, work was "cathartic" for GMA 7 actress Rhian Ramos, who figured in one of the more shocking scandals last year after breaking up with radio-TV personality Mo Twister.

She took a "leave" of three months, before having the nerve again for the GMA Films romantic-comedy "My Kontrabida Girl," which opened in theaters yesterday.

"I play someone vengeful, which is far from the real me," she told Inquirer. "I ended up using what I was going through [in real life]. In a way, it was therapeutic."

Unruffled

She explained that her role as a villainess allowed her to act out her frustrations within the safe confines of a movie set.

She described the controversy as "worse than bore camp," but one that pushed her to grow up. Her relationship with her family has vastly improved, she related, particularly with her mom, who survived a cancer scare last year. "My parents and sister are me through the worst crisis in my life. I realized that my family would always be there for me."

Her job is her solace. "Work is my happiness. It was important for me to do this film because I wanted to prove to myself that I

RHIAN 24

PH off piracy priority watch list, says OMB

By Marinel R. Cruz

OFFICIAL Media Board (OMB) chair Ronnie Ricketts said he regretted but understood actor Cesar Montano's decision to decline a Malacañang appointment as an OMB official.

Montano was to replace vice-letter Jabes Lorenzo as a board member on the advocacy group, Lorenzo's term expired when he ran for Quezon City councilor in 2010.

"Cesar's concern was that he wouldn't have enough time for OMB," Ricketts told Inquirer. "I understand him completely. This job is no joke, and he was well aware of that. He would have been a big help to the board, especially now that we are going full blast in our anti-piracy campaign."

OMB DIRECTOR Ricketts puts up his duties.

Battle-cry

Ricketts recently spoke before students of St. Paul University Quezon City, De La Salle College of St. Benilde, Technological University of the Philippines, Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Lyceum University and University of Santo Tomas in Manila, on the ill effects of piracy.

"Walang magbabantay kung walang kikili [He can sell only if no one will buy]," the OMB chief reasoned his battle cry. He said some of the students offered their own suggestions on curbing piracy.

"They asked if it was possible to lower movie ticket prices; P120 to P100 pesos or much more on their budget, compared to pirated DVDs that cost P50," Ricketts said.

He said he forwarded the suggestion to the stakeholders dealing their movie quarrels recurring.

Good news

Ricketts also said he recently received a copy of a special report from the

PIRACY E2

With Cecile, Lisa in weekend shows

IT'S TURNAF morning and over the past few days I've been running my brother's monthly dinners on my music player whenever I can. Our first rehearsal for "The Legends and the Classics" is tomorrow. I know we'll only be in premiere mode; still I want to show up prepared.

The concert is this Saturday and Sunday 5 to 8 at Cecile Licad and Lisa Macuja, sport significant memories of time with them, mostly laughing. The atmosphere has been relaxed thus far; no one has unfurled a manic shoot, lyric sheet or choreography layout. At least not with each other. Our interactions have largely been normal.

I know the moments (the good kind) will appear as we rush towards the story (also the good kind) as one another, and on the people we'll work with.

Fingers on fire

It must have been an adventure that I first witnessed Cecile play like wind chaser (seen in her early 20s when's turning 31. One need). I could see the intensity in her eyes, gazing alternately at the conductor and on the keyboards. She was wearing something that looked 90-prive, and her hair was pulled up in a tonic or a bun. I don't remember the current hoo-ing on her fingers.

Fast-forward to a couple of years ago, when I finally got the chance to watch her live. Gerard was conducting PSOrchestra64. That's when I saw how fast her fingers flew, how much the chaos was in her playing.

I met her very briefly after that concert, and she expressed an interest in the two of us working together sometime. Well, here we are, just days from making that happen, and I couldn't be more excited.

For all the heaven she has won for herself and the country as a classical pianist, it's her person that I have found most impressive. She may be a lady of few words, probably preferring to let her talent speak for itself (and it does), but when she does say something, you listen. Her words ring of humanity, truth, artless, unmistakably sophisticated, of how-it-is-done-before-one-make-a-perfunctory-excerpt-for. She has also mastered the art of unleashing the perfectly timed explosive to makers point.

I don't remember where I first met Lisa, perhaps

WWW E4

Hairloss is wrecking her life and she doesn't know why.

Thinning hair makes a woman look older. When your hair's health, shine and bounce weaken, it seems your personality is likewise affected. Self-consciousness, diminished self-esteem, even bouts of depression may ensue.

Most women who have gone through this harrowing experience say they tried everything to stop hairloss, from special treatments at the salon, to a whole range of over-the-counter products. But nothing worked. Sadly, many "remedies" may have actually made the condition worse. Until they found out the reason why they were losing hair, little could be done to end the problem.

Possible reasons for hairloss.

Woman's hairloss can be caused by hormonal changes. Female Pattern Baldness (or Androgenetic Alopecia) is a reaction to male hormones in the body (androgens) which can weaken a woman's hair. Other factors can be stress, poor nutrition, illnesses and reaction to certain medications, childbirth and menopause, frequent coloring, curling, straightening, and many more. Most causes of hairloss, when they are correctly identified, can be treated with good results.

Getting the facts on why you are losing hair.

Trichology is the study of the functions and problems of hair. A trichologist is someone who has been educated in the subject and is qualified to determine the reasons why your hair is not in good health.

Where do you find a trichologist? One source that has been synonymous with Professional Trichology in the Philippines for more than 25 years: Swanson. Swanson trichologists will examine your hair and scalp and give you advice on what to do.

A trichologist - what does it cost?

Nothing. Swanson trichologists offer an in-depth Hair & Scalp analysis totally free of charge.

Pre-hairloss symptoms.

Before your hair starts falling out, be aware of early warning signs such as persistent dandruff, flaking, and scalp irritations. Bad hairdoes - see a trichologist when you see these signs!

These visible indications are embarrassing, and when combined with dirt in the atmosphere, shampoo chemicals or excess oil/sweat, they can block follicles, badly affecting hair growth.

Treatments to help your hair.

Depending on the findings of your Hair & Scalp analysis, you can decide on treatment programs including:

ULTRA AGE REINFORCER - deep-cleans scalp, creates healthier environment for growth. Hair becomes thicker, shinier, more lush.

ULTRA-LUSH VOLUMIZER - quickly controls and stops hair fall, helps restore original hairlines, volume and softness.

SCALP-CORRECTIVE - eliminates dandruff. Baking and other irritations, restores scalp to normal state, prevents recurrent hairloss.

Make an appointment today to see a trichologist free of charge.
Call Swanson at 893-4947/
234-0851(Cebu).

Chip off the old block

FOR YEARS now, Luis Manzano has been enhancing all sorts of TV shows. But in the aftermath of some televisions the last question remains: Does he have it in him to become a good game-and-talk show host as his dad, Edu?

Well, last week at least, the first part of that question was answered in the positive when Luis hosted the game show "Tried vs. Verified." He earned not to be a bit enough game show host, or there's hope that, in due time, he could do even better as his father "Salbe-Time."

Like Edu, Luis is a fun-loving guy and that helps keep his new show light, and sometimes even small. He is still a bit too fond look.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor J. Torres

However, as the game show's pilot veteran sometimes stepped in terms of energy and tempo.

Worse, the celebrity contestant, Carmina Villarroel, was too giddy and all over the place, a veritable bundle of nerves, and Luis couldn't quite rein her in and reestablish the show's proper focus and timing.

In the future, the new game show must should realize that while the program should come off as a fun romp, it should also contain enough informational chirping and snickering to keep the level of tension and excitement consistently on the rise.

It is not enough for the host to be perky and entertaining. He also needs to keep a tight grip on the proceedings and on his guest contestant, so as to make sure that the program's "thing active" is clearly defined and sustained.

Viewers do not need to know that all this is taking place behind the scenes. In fact, they should be blissfully unaware of it, so they can go with the seemingly unstructured and fun flow of the game.

Meeting as craft, art

Hosting a game show well is both a craft and an art, which is why so few TV personalities emerge as masters of the genre. Thus far in his TV hosting career, Luis has relied on his melodic sense of humor to get by with passing marks, if not actually flying colors, but a game show requires handling that is more multifaceted and psychologically savvy.

Well, Luis is not a know-it-all talent, so if he applies himself and continues to learn the intricacies of his new calling, he should be able to get his act together soon. It would also help if he is given more interesting and less erratic celebrity contestants with whom to interact. Most game show hosts can work well with anybody, but talents relatively zero at the craft should be helped by tons of a more appropriate choice of stars as guests in their shows.

Some promising "latecomers" who come to mind include Willie Nepomuceno, Mitch Valdes, Tessie Tomas, Ana Feleo, Bobo Carvajal, Robert Seña, Lorna Kapauan, Ali Sotto, Ogie Alcasid, Michael V., Jacy Allonsi and Tirso Cruz III.

Of course, when he's finally ready, Luis would get as his ultimate celebrity contestant (arguably, of course) his own parents, the source of his lovely set of performing genes—Pilma Bautista and Edu Manzano.

LUIS Manzano: Game to go.

Araneta Theaters

CINEPLEX

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

3D

GATEWAY MALL

ALI MALL

Watch the Ms. Filipinas Fashion Show March 17 - 6pm | Ali Mall Activity Area

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

THEATRE MALL

PROMENADE

MUSEUM VII

Trinoma

Ayala Malls

MOVIE TIME

GLORIETTA 4

1: THE LOVELY (SU)
2: CORAZON: ANG UNANG ASAWANG
3: JOHN CARTER (SU)
4: MY KONTRABIDA GIRL
5: MIRROR, MIRROR
6: MIRROR, MIRROR
7: CORAZON: ANG UNANG ASAWANG

GREENBELT 1

1: CORAZON: ANG UNANG ASAWANG
2: MIRROR, MIRROR

GREENBELT 5

1: MIRROR, MIRROR
2: JOHN CARTER (SU)
3: MIRROR, MIRROR
4: THE LORAX (SU)
5: JOHN CARTER

ALABANG TOWN CENTER

1: MIRROR, MIRROR
2: JOHN CARTER (SU)
3: THE LORAX (SU)
4: MY KONTRABIDA GIRL
5: MIRROR, MIRROR

ARANA CENTER CINEMA

1: MIRROR, MIRROR
2: JOHN CARTER
3: CORAZON
4: UNOFFICIALLY YOURS THIS MEANS WAR

MARQUEE

1: JOHN CARTER
2: THE LORAX (SU)
3: MIRROR, MIRROR
4: MY KONTRABIDA GIRL

MARKET! MARKET!

1: JOHN CARTER (SU)
2: MIRROR, MIRROR
3: MIRROR, MIRROR
4: THE LORAX (SU)
5: CORAZON: ANG UNANG ASAWANG
6: MY KONTRABIDA GIRL
7: JOHN CARTER

TRINOMA

1: CORAZON: ANG UNANG ASAWANG
2: JOHN CARTER
3: THE LORAX (SU)
4: JOHN CARTER
5: MY KONTRABIDA GIRL
6: MIRROR, MIRROR
7: MIRROR, MIRROR

ABREEZA

1: THE LORAX (SU)
2: JOHN CARTER
3: MIRROR, MIRROR
4: MY KONTRABIDA GIRL

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CESAR Montano

PH off piracy...

From page E1

International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA) that said the Philippines, from a "priority watch" listing, has now been downgraded to "watch list."

Some 22 countries in the "watch list" category include Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Brazil, Egypt, Vietnam and Malaysia.

It is special report released in February the IIPA said it was "heartened" to hear that a new and, apparently, more effective policy counseling avoidance and piracy was implemented in the Philippines in 2011.

Ripple effect

The report said: "The effects of the closure of the market and distribution hubs in the Quiapo-Divisoria area rippled throughout the community. It demonstrated that with the credible threat of enforcement, piracy can be reduced. The OMB and Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim should be commended for their unprecedented enforcement actions. Other cities and provinces in Metro Manila have indicated they would like to follow their example."

Piracy-free

Bickets said the antipiracy drive has turned commercial establishments like Robinsons Place in Malate, Makati Cinema Square in Makati, and St. Francis Mall in Mandaluyong into piracy-free zones. "The agencies is currently outsourcing with the management of Worldwide Entertainment Complex in Pasig City to seek help for the cleanup," he said.

The OMB chief added that he was also helping in bring policemen to Robinsons Place's cinemas on April 6. "This is not part of my job but I'm going out of my way to help. I am also talking to the mall owners and administrators about the possibility of putting up units carrying original DVDs. This is one way of ensuring that malls do not resort to selling bootleg material again."

E-mail the author at inquirer.com.ph

Bela blossoms

Kapuso star steps it up with daring roles on both big and small screens

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

GMA 7 young star Bela Padilla is certain that she won't get type-cast playing sweet girls on screen.

She shudders between mature ("Machete") and villainous ("Bridal") roles on the small screen quite effortlessly, she says.

Furthermore, she gets to tackle a complex character in her latest afternoon soap opera, "Mulawin vs Ravena."

'Zumba' fan

"In one show, there's no close and hard touch." She points out. "All the characters are depicted in normal people who have over-positive and negative traits. As in real life, things are not just black and white ... but are in all shades of gray."

Unsurprisingly, Bela is one of the stars in GMA Films' romantic comedy "My Amerikoala Cool," top-billed by Aljur Abrenica and Rhian Ramos, and directed by Jade Castro.

"I play one of Aljur's girlfriends," she quips.

She was excited to work with Jade, she says, since it's a fan of his hit comedy "Trumbelobo 1: Patayin sa Shokot si Nonoy Boy."

During the workshops held for the cast, Bela managed to impress the indie filmmaker, who intones, "She is funny and smart. She plays a kooky character and shows a lot of promise."

Bela is determined to somehow live over—in spite of (also) her many off-the-set duties—her childhood dream of the fair that she comes from a celebrated show biz clan.

Daring darling

One sign-aged of the girl's daring is her decision to pose in a swimsuit for a men's magazine that resulted in a carousel of controversies. (Critics deemed the original cover "racist" because it showed the adorable-skinned Bela with dark-skinned models.)

Although she told her mom about the carousel, she wasn't able to inform her grandmother (Via Castro before) about. "When she found out about it, Mama Eva was okay with it. My mom found it needed," she recounts.

Helpful tips

The resulting intrigue has taught her "to respect other people's opinions and feelings."

She says she didn't have time to prepare for the sexy shoot. "I went jogging three nights before the pictorial. It helped that I had been going to the gym long before that."

She has been "working out diligently since winning the Miss's Darling and Miss Friendship titles at the Asian Super Model with her year in China.

"I advise the teen's Filipina contestants to enjoy herself," she says. "I did not expect to win. I just had fun."

OLIVER Martinez and Halle Berry

Halle Berry, Olivier Martinez to wed

BEVERLY HILLS—French actor Olivier Martinez has confirmed that he and Oscar-winning actress Halle Berry are engaged to marry, a report said.

"Yes, of course it's true," Martinez told the Hollywood Reporter over the weekend when he was to come for the opening of his new restaurant, Villa Azur.

Martinez, reunited in fashion, that their engagement ring is being designed by Robert Manda of Paris, "a real artist" whose family has designed rings for kings and queens for centuries."

Martinez and Berry met during the filming of "Dark Tide" in 2010. Berry has been married twice before and has a 5-year-old daughter with comedian-model Gabriel Aubry. AFP

Unsure about marriage now

By Marinel R. Cruz

ACTOR Derek Ramsay, who is reportedly being pursued in romance by TVS, said he was "open to correct changes" now that his contract with ABS-CBN has expired.

But the actor said he was still waiting for a renewed offer from his home network before making a decision. He said he met recently with Kapamilya executives Gabby Lopez, Cindy Kimberly-Garcia, Cory Vidanes and Malou Santos. "They told me to make a wish list, but I'm not the type to make demands. I'd rather the offer came from them. I want to know what their plans are. They're like family to me," Derek told the reporters during the press conference for his latest movie, "Cinemanovela Unang Sayang."

Not about money

Derek added: "It was nice of them to ask to meet my dad. The first thing said on the table was that, this wasn't about money. I guess, I have proven that with the numbers of years I have been with ABS-CBN."

The 32-year-old actor also said he wouldn't have been with ABS-CBN to make a comeback if, I love this network. Although there has been a few disappointments, the network has done a lot for me. That's what my family is asking into consideration in figuring out what is best for me, because I am not very good in money matters."

Is moving to another channel an option? "I have always been open to career changes," Derek replied. "But there is no firm proposal from TVS."

Derek explained that the rumored transfer could be the result of his being vocal about wanting to get involved with the reality program, "Wedding Bars," which TVS is airing soon. "I wanted to be in it," he said, "just as host, but as a contestant."

He denied talk that his parents recently met with TVS chair Manny Pangilinan in Hong Kong. "It was years ago, pa lang," he stressed. "My dad does a lot of work for Channel 5, Smart and PLDT.....in security and electronics."

Kimberly did TVS ads but dad is supportive all of the actor's projects, should he transfer. "That means offended my family," said Derek. "My father built his name honestly. He's too proud to engage in such deals."

Derek said a multinational company offered to buy his father's business, but when the offer fizzled, he closed. "He had a big family meeting once it's said. 'Dad, do what you want. Your responsibility as my parent is finished. Enjoy your life.' I'd really love for my dad to just play golf every day and for my mom to tend her garden. But they choose to drive every day from Tagaytay, where they live, to Cavite, where their 300 employees."

ERICH Gonzales and Derek Ramsay (Top photo) with DJ Angelica Panganiban (Lower photo)

Mixed feelings

Derek said his father usually tried to convince him to run the business, but that the discussion ended up in a big fight. "I definitely don't see myself doing that. When I graduated college, he made me help, but it didn't work. That's the reason I am money from home," he recounted. "But things have changed. My dad just showed his support for what I do by starting with my house."

After doing the hard-earned feelings about, Derek admitted, was settling down at this point with longtime girlfriend, actress Isabelle Panganiban. He elaborated: "Angel is ready, but she's at the peak of her career. I guess we'll know in a year or two. She has a lot of projects lined up this year. I'm ready, too—I don't think there's a 'right age for it....we'll just know it and see."

He denied that Angel and his "Cinemanovela" co-star Erich Gonzales had a rift last year, while filming was ongoing. Angel reportedly got jealous when Derek introduced Erich to his mom, Remedios. "My mom asked if she could meet Erich....mom's a fan....so I set it up," Derek said. "I would have known, if Angel and Erich had fought because Angel and I talk about everything. She even trained on me for my role."

"Cinemanovela," directed by Richard Somes, also features Mark Gil, Rochie Pangyarayi, Alessandra Lopez, among others. The film, a co-production of Star Cinema and Skylight Films, is now showing in theaters.

With Cecile, Lisa in weekend shows

From page E3

when she watched a past concert of mine, and she brought her two children, Missy and Elise backstage.

I'm not her perform only on TV and YouTube, and I just did an MCINCinterview with her which aired last Sunday. The longest time I've spent in the same room with her but first for our photo session and press con, so I got to know her in a better light first, and as a direct second. Which is the reason for me.

To how she speaks of her training, her nervous, her toilet company, her children, her husband, her family ... of the artistic cold in Russia and dancing ... as natural, easy to her... it's mixed that just to be able to perform for the fans that have been waiting to see her ... of an experimental surgery on one foot to hopefully guarantee a few more years of her love for dancing... and of the discipline it takes to maintain her ridiculously stunning body if let you see... it is such a thing of beauty that I kept thinking to her in the photo shoot: "You're so amazing!"—I could see such a high degree of passion, drive, love and commitment for the most rewarding of form.

Just the same

I feel like the darker among the three of us, I don't spend a night home a day practicing (except when working on a musical), or do a full class before a performance. Maybe because my approach goes those two different way level chords. That said, I do get obsessed and driven when it's time to learn something new, so we've got her wire to sing with the Jupiter. It's only fitting thought throughout the All three become the one song, finding the right way to sing it, figuring out how and when to breathe in order to get that note just right, and releasing whatever tons of that those night-after-after-after me. And then feeling satisfaction when I unleash it at a show, knowing I devoted a great deals of time to it.

We are there very distinct personalities—I think I'm the most talkative, Lisa is the most poised, and Cecile the most reserved—presenting three very different artistic. But we're all passionate about what we do, and the role what cut across like the tedious amount of time in rehearsals, costume and hair and make-up designers who we've come to know and love over the years. We are all surrounded by extremely supportive families, and are grateful for their presence. We all want for more years doing what it is we love, and hope that we've made the country proud.

The Legends and The Classics—March 17 & 18, 2pm each—at the Lyric Hub at the CCP Main Theater. Resource Lupae directs, Gerard Salonga is our musical director and conductor. Tickets are available at TicketWorld. (www.ticketworld.com.ph) or call 891-9999.

WILLIAM with visitor Alyssa Jaramillo

Rhian...

From page E1

would know in spite of what happened."

Is she ready to love again? "Yes," she remarked, then quickly backtracked. "I do not want to sound as if I have been traumatized. See all men are be that mean. My friends, those who stood by me, are living proof that there is a lot of good in people."

She denied rumors linking her to KC Montero, or to anyone else—not even Jeric Lorenzo, son of Sen. Pimpin Lorenzo. "I apologize to KC and Jeric ... who were dragged into the tete-a-tete. I had especially bad for Jeric, who is not from show biz. I must have been through Hurricane Ondoy-Ketsana's. We were cut in a gamay, but he was singled out."

Happy for sure

Rhian remained upbeat, even when talk turned to the resignation of scandal-hit Batasan Secretary-General Marilyn Barua-Yap. "I am glad because she will have more time for her family," Rhian explained. "She can relax for happier days."

At the same time, Rhian is relieved. "I hope the investigators stop. Those people say I get property only because of my mom's influence. I always wanted to be myself."

After "Scandalously Girl," a new song is in the works for Rhian.

MICHELLE'TTE SHERIDAN

Edie Brit's killing: He says, she says

LOS ANGELES—The creator of "Desperate Housewives" told jurors on Monday he thought he had permission to tap the head of Nicollette Sheridan but acknowledged the incident recurred a strained and awkward dynamic with an actress he considered smart and feisty.

A scallop

Marc Cherry testified during Sheridan's wrongful termination trial that by the time he hit Sheridan in Sept. 2009—he calls it a tap for artistic direction, she contends it was a beating—he had already received permission to kill off her character Edie Britt: moochy Realtor-lothario Sheridan's version of events, although the actress has told jurors she never gave permission for the show's creator to touch her so much as a finger in a way that she said left her stunned. The incident occurred on the show's set as the actress and Cherry discussed a scene that Sheridan didn't feel had enough comedy.

He said he wanted the actress to have some physical interaction with her onscreen husband to the scene and acknowledged that during a deposition he testified that he "assumed to demonstrate to get my point across." In character, Edie Britt's character hits her husband with a magazine and clubs him, but doesn't strike his head.

Rare talent

"I tapped her head," Cherry said on Monday. He denied that he had struck Sheridan hard and was upset that people thought he hit a woman. He said he requested Sheridan as a rare talent, a beautiful actress who could pull off comedy.

Sheridan, who is seeking more than $6 million, said jurors last week the incident started her. "It was humiliating," Sheridan told the jury. "It was unfathomable to me that I had just been hit by my boss."

Cherry was flustered at times during questioning by Sheridan's attorney on Monday, but became more comfortable as his own attorney asked him to describe how he developed "Housewives" after a conversation with his mother more than a decade ago. The idea grew out of watching a beat about a mother who drowned her child, Cherry said, and his mother's revelation that she had felt desperate and trapped.

Cherry told the jury that his mother was the perfect wife and mother and that he wanted to explore the secret lives and desires of women when he created "Desperate Housewives."

"Desperate Housewives," a glossy prime-time soap, dy'soap opera with an ensemble cast including Teri Hatcher and Longoria, made a pop culture and ratings splash when it premiered in 2004 but has seen its audience dwindle. It is on its last season.

Three reasons

Cherry testified that he had three reasons for killing off Britt—creative, non-casting, and complaints about Sheridan's behavior. He admitted there was no documentation about the actress's alleged behavior, which included meltdowns, forgetting lines and wearing a prop person rudely.

Mark Sauer, Sheridan's attorney, has noted that Sheridan's contract was renewed just days after the May 2008 meeting during which Cherry claims he was given permission to hit her the actress. That renewal decision meant the actress's pay was bumped to $175,000 per episode and she received a full share of profits from the series.

Beside also played a clip of an interview Cherry gave before the start of season five, which he said showed Sheridan's lies, in which he said the show would focus on the lives of five characters played by Teri Hatcher, Brenda Cross, Longoria, Huffman and Sheridan.

Sheridan, who is seeking more than $6 million, said jurors last week the incident started her. "It was humiliating," AP

Fest exec's resignation seen 2 ways

By Marinel R. Cruz

INES JARDIN

"THE NEED for a changing of the guard is an ongoing situation is needed to order for it to cope with developments. [The resignation] of Ines Jardin can only make Cinemalaya more dynamic," festival talent manager Bill Bankirai on the news that Jardin had resigned from his position as festival director of the Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival on March 5.

Executive Entertainment outgoing director of Interville, whose award, Alan Paule, was involved in the controversial disqualification of Francesca Reyes' "MNL 143," one of the finalists in the annual indie fest.

"You must have been so tired of all these [intrigues that he spent to resign]. I still think there are other ways of saving the situation," Interville pointed out. "You can negotiate, come up with a compromise ... Dialogue is very important."

Jardin, who was president and artistic director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines when Cinemalaya debuted in 2005, earlier said he was "sad and disheartened" by the controversies surrounding the festival.

On Tuesday, he turned down Inquirer Entertainment's request for an interview "to avoid further complications," although he did recall that after eight years of incessant strife, conversion and bickering, he was tired. Cinema CEO artistic director Chris Millado is slated as his replacement.

ALAN PAULE

At press time, representatives of the CCP c major stockholder in the Cinemalaya Foundation, are meeting with Kondracion chair Imelda Cajipalag to regarding the issue.

The disqualification of "MNL 143" in the 10-day festival emergency resumed from Reyes' numerous to cast Paule and Joy Vi- ado as the lead roles, despite the fact that Cinemalaya deemed them "unsuitable for the material." Dismissing head Bob Ilac Ilac had warned Victor Nieto and Paule's actions are in bad faith.

Interville countered: "Since Cinemalaya develops and nurtures filmmakers, it must be very patient. These filmmakers can sometimes be a bit aggressive and emotional. They are young, artist and that has to nurture them and not to stop them from their love for the industry's benefit."

Good words

Like Interville, film producer and talent manager Boots Pesico believed that "service Cinemalaya provides and procedures should be reviewed so changes can be made for the better."

Bernie, who produced last year's Best Picture Finalist, "Liga Ba U, Lupit Na Mo," described Jardin as someone who "takes on the roles of the independent artist."

Bernie recalled the time when Jardin convinced him not to back out from the competition after a "heated discussion" such has on whether or not to cast Edgar Allan Guzman and Mercedes Cabral to play the lead roles. Bernie reportedly wanted in line actors that have more "mainstream appeal."

"He protected the artists. He guarded the festival's integrity," Bernie said of Jardin. "I was overtly really exhilarated with the movie's positive reviews and awards, as well as its box office success [at the first]."

While Jardin's resignation, Bernie said, "He can focus his efforts to champion the cause of independent artists like he used to, without biases and roadblocks of interest."

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Asia's 'beTV'

STARTING April 2, ANN Beyond will be known across Asia-to-be-TV. The channel will become a new on- and off-air look and expanded content with such new programs as "Star Ave," "Necessary Boyfriend" and "X-Dillod Mini."

'McPhearson'

Exclusive McPhee stars in Steven Spielberg's TV production, "Smash," about the making of a Broadway musical based on the life of screen star Marilyn Monroe.

McPhee plays Karen Cartwright, an aspiring theater actress from Iowa.

The show airs Thursdays, 9 p.m. on Diva Universal Ukrain Noord Celtic Ch. 60, Cablelink Ch. 37, Destan Satellite Ch. 33, Global Destiny Ch. 40, and SkyCable Ch. 37).

'Ben 10'

"Ben 10: Ultimate Alien," the first CG-animated TV series, premiered on Mar. 13, 9 a.m. at Cartoon Network. The episode appears throughout the month.

OPM also stands for 'Ogie, Pickup Man'

Singer's latest projects meant to promote local music onscreen and online

By Rayzel Sun Diego Jr.

THE CONCERNED is not lost on singer Ogie Alcasid, who is currently producer of the Organizasyon ng Pilipinong Bilog Ayoki (OPM). These days, all his projects (and efforts) seem geared toward the promotion of local music and musicians.

Even "Boy Pickup," the wildly popular segment on the GMA 7 gag show "Bubble Gang" which will soon become a movie (2012 Filmex Regal), is a vehicle for his music advocacy.

Soundtrack

"We are preparing an original soundtrack for the 'Boy Pickup' movie," he told the Inquirer.

Collaborating with him on the soundtrack are Filipino-American hip-hop group Q-York and solo Regine Velasquez. "We will soon have a full Boy Pickup-fashion line: caps, shoes, shirts, shorts, accessories. Exciting."

"Kids love the bling-bling. Boy Pickup items are selling well at Francis Magalona Clothing store outlets," Ogie noted.

Boy Pickup, he related, traces its roots to the hip-hop community ("Bubble Gang" co-star) Michael V. and I are big fans of Hip'hop," he confessed.

FlipTop swagger

FlipTop videos — which features Filipino rappers engaged in a showdown a la modern Balagtasan — have gone viral. "We watch FlipTop videos on YouTube all the time," Ogie explained.

In creating Boy Pickup, he tried to imbibe the "FlipTop swagger and look" — with a little of 50 Cent thrown in for good measure.

Now, Boy Pickup has gone viral as well — with its own loyal following on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Even Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and other politicians have been quoting Boy Pickup in their speeches.

"I never thought it would grow this big," Ogie quipped. The Boy Pickup movie, which is directed by Dominic Zapata, also features Pinoy rock legend Joey "Hajo" Smith.

"Hajo is my artist. He is Yoda to Boy's Luke Skywalker," Ogie said.

Ogie has another movie this year, "I'm Richie Eddoc," which also pays tribute to local music icons, the Apo Hiking Society.

Produced by Ironi and directed by Chris Martinez, "I'm" gives Ogie and the cast (Jon Jon Pedilla, Gary Valenciano, and Bugoy Dominguez) an opportunity to revisit the Apo songbook.

"It's in line with what I advocate for OPM," Ogie said. "The music will hopefully introduce the music of Apo to today's youth." Apo's music can easily move across generations, he said, "because their songs are about everyday stories everyone can relate to ... Pinoy to Pinoy."

Online store

With the help of other music artists like Jett Pangan of The Dawn, Ogie has put together a project dubbed opm2go — an online music store that makes local songs available for downloading at P10 and P15 a pop. Fifty percent of the revenues of every song sold go to the artist," Ogie said.

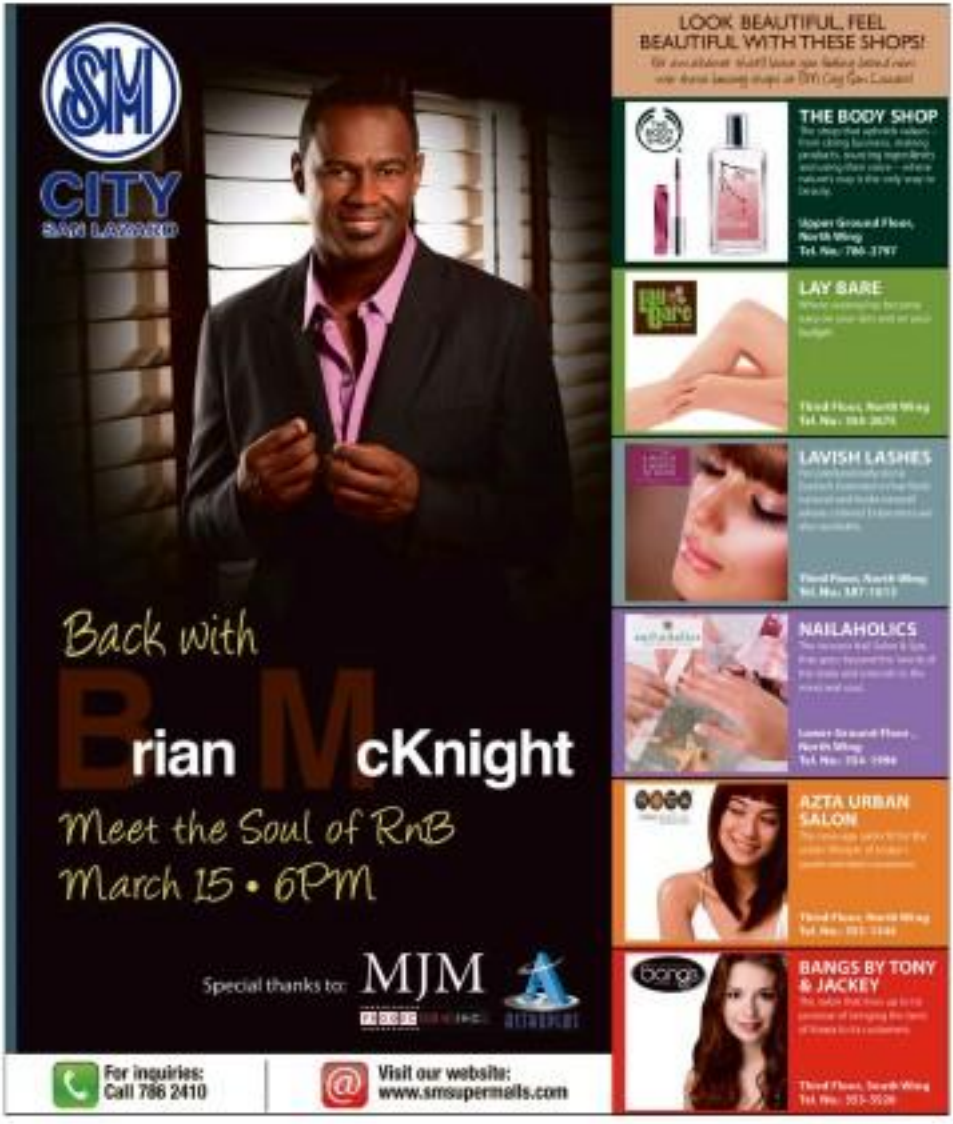
Songs of artists as diverse as Celeste Legaspi and Sandwich are available on the opm2go site.

Although it is a separate endeavor from his job as OPM head, the idea for the online store arose from numerous discussions with local musicians — particularly independent and unsigned bands and singers. "A lot of our artists are looking for websites as very basic platforms," he said.

Straight arrow

It is true when local record labels are closing shop, opm2go encourages musicians to boost insight in the concerns.

"Sales are shifting from CDs to mp3 downloading," Ogie conceded. "Our goal is to popularize the new sound of OPM — not only in the Philippines, but all over the world. We want to help musicians sell their songs so they can continue creating their music," he said.

(lbgsentsundiego@yahoo2.com)

PLAYTOP fans Michael V (left) and Ogie watch Pinoy hip-hoppers on YouTube.